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LETTERS
OF
Religion and *Vertue*,
To several
GENTLEMEN
AND
LADIES.
With some SHORT
REFLECTIONS
ON
DIVERS SUBJECTS.

LONDON,
Printed for *Henry Bonwicke*, at the *Red-Lyon* in St. *Paul's Church-Yard*, 1695.

REFLECTIONS

With some SHORT

LADIES

AND

GENTLEMEN

TO WHOM

LETTERS

TO THE
HONOURABLE
THE
Lord *SPENCER.*

My Lord,

THE following Papers I humbly Dedicate to Your Lordship, who am,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt Obliged,

Humble Servant.

THE PREFACE.

THE Design of the following Papers is to serve the Interests of Vertue, which is the same with serving God; in whose Service all our Happiness and our Glory consists: And every thing else is Misery and Impertinence, a squandring of Life, and trifling with our Creation.

The

The Epiſtolary Way of Writing I preferr'd to all other, as the beſt Means, in Order to this beſt End; as moſt eaſie, moſt familiar, and moſt natural. But ſo as not to trouble the Reader with the private and perſonal Circumſtances of a Letter; which to him are wholly uſeleſs and impertinent, and therefore fitter to be omitted.

To oppoſe an Age that has declared in the Behalf of Ruine, and is fond of being undone; that has ſided with Vice and Miſery to its utter Deſtruction, and that againſt all the Care and Compaſſion

of

of God; againſt it ſelf, againſt Vertue and Holineſs, and all that's wiſe or happy; is an Undertaking worthy the greateſt Man in the World, and therefore above me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all Men, and am not Meet to be called a Chriſtian. But if theſe worthleſs Papers ſhall have any ſuch Effect, or ſhall contribute ought to the Recovery of an Age, that has no Compaſſion on it ſelf; and appeaſe the Calamities of a Generation that won't be warn'd, but ſeems reſolved to exhauſt all the Labours and Ruines of Wickedneſs,

and

and prove the utmoſt Extremity of Vice and Error; I ſhall think 'em well beſtowed, and no trifling Service to the blaſted Age, not quite dead.

Books *Printed for* HENRY BONWICKE, *at the* Red Lion *in* St. Paul's Church-yard.

THE *General History of the Reformation of the Church*: Written in Latin by *John Sleidan*: Faithfully Englished. To which is added, *A Continuation to the End of the Council of* Trent. By *E. Bohun*, Esq;. In *Folio*.

Two Useful Cases Resolved: I. Whether a State of Salvation be attainable. II. What is the Rule by which this Certainty is to be attained. In *Quarto*.

Pia Desideria: Or, *Divine Addresses*: In Three Books. I. Sighs of the Penitent Soul. II. Desires of the Religious Soul. III. Ecstacies of the Enamoured Soul. Illustrated with Forty Seven Copper Plates. Written in Latin: Englished by *Edm. Arwaker*, M. A. *Octavo*.

A New Description of Paris: Containing a particular Account of all the Churches, Palaces, Monasteries, Colleges, Hospitals, Libraries, Cabinets of Rarities, Academies of the *Virtuosi*, Paintings, Medals, Statues and other Sculptures, Monuments, and Publick Inscriptions: With all other Remarkable Matters

ters in that great and famous City
Translated out of French. To which
added, *A Map of* Paris.

The Art of Catechising: Or, *The Com*
pleat Catechist: In Four Books. I. Th
Church-Catechism Resolved into Eas
Questions. II. An Exposition of it,
a Continued, Full, and Plain Discours
III. The *Church-Catechism* Resolved int
Scripture-Proofs. IV. The Whole Duty
of Man Reduced into Questions. Fitte
for the meanest Capacities, the weake
Memories, the plainest Teachers, and th
most uninstructed Learners.

Country-Conversations: Being an Ac
count of some Discourses that happene
in a Visit to the Country, last Summe
on divers Subjects; chiefly, of the Mo
dern Comedies, of Drinking, of Tran
lated Verse, of Painting and Painter
of Poets and Poetry.

LETTERS
OF
Religion and *Vertue.*

LETTER I.

MADAM,

LET those Beauties never fade, that are preserv'd by so much Vertue: And when your last Hour is come, and you are going for ever you know not whither, may the Angel of your Nativity, he who is about your Path, and about your Bed, and spies out all your Ways, bear you on his Purple Wings, to the Palaces of Glory.

Nor let him minister to you in vain, while you are alive, and amongst us: When he whispers, do you hearken, and,

obey; and do, or abſtain, as he. di
rects you; though ſtill guarding you
ſelf againſt a Scorbutick Enthuſiaſm
and the Vanity and Corruption o
your own Heart, that are apt to coun
terfeit the Angel: And therefore be ve
ry wary.

If the Angels are Miniſtring Spirits
and miniſter to the Heirs of Eterna
Salvation, how ſhall their Miniſterie
profit us, if we do not comply with
them; and they ſhall ſerve in vain, an
we ſhall be waited on in vain; we ſhal
do the Things they warn us againſt, an
omit the Good they move us to; though
ſtill we are to pray, and endeavour ear-
neſtly for the Gift of Diſcerning of Spi-
rits: For the Evil Spirits too will often
pretend to reſtrain us from Evil, and
move us to Good; but their Deſign i
Good is Evil, and to gain Credit for th
contrary Motions.

Therefore I know no ſurer Guard than
Prayer, to detect the exquiſite Counter-
feit: Carry the doubt to God, and be
not too haſty to follow the Guide you
have never ſeen, and 'tis likely never will
till you have fetch'd the laſt Sigh, and the
Pangs of Death ſhall give you eaſe, and
ſet you at reſt for ever.

Theſe are the moſt dangerous Rocks
and Sands that lie in our Way, on
which

which many a zealous Religion, and well-meaning Vertue, have been caſt away.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER II.

SIR,

IF theſe Letters profit you, they will profit me in the Day of Accounts; for the Good and Evil we have done here, will follow us thither.

Let the laſt Hour mingle with every Hour of your Life, and you ſhall be filled with Wiſdom and Caution, and have power over the World, and your ſelf; and know how to die, before there be Occaſion for it.

Let the Scriptures wear your Eyes, and over-run your Soul; bind them about your Neck, and write them upon the Table of your Heart; let them ſleep with you, and let them wake with you, and let the *Pſalms* in particular work all their various Effects upon you; now lamenting your paſt Follies, now imploring Forgiveneſs, now fainting with a Senſe of the infinite Mercy, and Patience, and Condeſcention of God, now begging his

Grace, now exalting his Glory, now praiſing him with the Bleſſed, and triumphing in his Salvation.

Aſpire continually to the Prayer that never ceaſes, becauſe your Danger and your Temptation never ceaſes: And be ever praiſing God, becauſe his Mercy is everlaſting.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER III.

MADAM,

SO may you ſhine in Glory, as you endeavour here to excel in Grace: Let that Face that bears the Impreſs of ſo much Holineſs behold the Angels for ever in Glory: Let that heavenly Mein and Perſon be ſeen for ever radiant in the upper Life, where you ſhall behold all your Prayers and Vows turn'd to Glories, and Light, and Ecſtaſies; into Kingdoms and Crowns, and everlaſting Beauty and Loves.

Becauſe I love you as a Chriſtian, I wiſh you eternal Proſperity, and will ſeek to do you good, by improving your Soul, by aſſiſting your Vertues, by praying for you, by writing to you, by

raiſing you, by warning you, by encou-
ging you.

Let the Example of *Chriſt* and his
recepts always fill your Mind, and go-
ern your Life; let the Lives and Deaths
f the Apoſtles, and Martyrs, and Con-
ſſors, of all the holy Men and Women
hat now behold *Jeſus* Face to Face)
arm you to follow them, as they did
hriſt.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER IV.

SIR,

IF the whole World ſhall prove you
nothing when your Soul is loſt, how
all a ſmall part of it deſerve your
rongeſt Thoughts and Cares?

Endeavour to be of that Mind now,
hat Death ſhall make you of when
ou are quitting the World you have
oil'd for; whoſe Rewards you ſhall al-
ays find crowded with Bitterneſs and
iſappointment, and the rankeſt Delu-
ons.

But the Purſuits of Vertue will make
ou other Returns: You ſhall have the
leaven you ſeek for; and you ſhall own

the Reward is greater than your Expe
ctation, and bigger than your Notion o
it; and ſhall fill all the Deſires of you
thirſty Soul.

If you are wiſe, be wiſe to the pur
poſe, and be wiſe for your ſelf, and b
wiſe for ever: Set your Value and Di
eſteem of Things right; underſtand th
World, and the other, as you ſhould
be wiſe in earneſt, and purſue your Hap
pineſs as you ought.

I am, Sir, &c

LETTTR V.

Sir,

WHat ſhall it avail you in that Hou
which ſhall thruſt you out of th
World, that your Blood and Clothes ar
better than mine? That you lie on
richer Bed, and ſit at a better Table
than I? Do not abuſe your ſelf, and
the Truth; but let our Saviour's, *Wo
unto you Rich, for you have received you
Conſolation*; and his, *Bleſſed are ye Poor
for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven*, giv
you right Thoughts, and a true Judg
ment in this Matter.

Extract what Comfort you can out of that Saying of our Saviour's, That *'tis easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Person to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*: Remember that he who said it, and much more to the same purpose, (our Great Master) had not where to lay his Head, though by him both the Worlds were made: And *it is enough for the Disciple, that he be as his Master.*

Be familiar with the Examples of the first Ages of the Christian Religion; and behold with what Faith, and Zeal, and Patience, they follow'd their dear Master and Lord, and trod in his Steps, and put on his Poverty, and wore his Disgraces and Reproaches, who now shine forth like the Sun, in the Kingdom of the Father.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER VI.

SIR,

IF you truly aspire to Glory, let it be by a Contempt of all Worldly Things: And you cannot be great, but by being greater than the whole World.

To be great according to the World is to be little and fooliſh for ever: There is no other Pattern of Wiſdom and true Greatneſs, but that of our poor and perſecuted Lord and Maſter, the General of our Salvation, who was made perfect through Sufferings.

'Tis too much to contradict the Sayings of our Saviour and Redeemer, and 'tis more to contradict his Example. If you would be rich, be poor: If you would be honourable, be deſpiſed: If you would live for ever, loſe your Life for his ſake and the Goſpel's.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER VII.

MADAM,

IF you are truly pious and holy, why ſhould you ſeek any farther Comfort? For you are capable of none greater, though the Globe of the Earth were yours, and though it were drained for your uſe.

Be contented to want ſome leſſer Comforts for a while, till you have laid down your Body, and worn out the Years of

your

your Pilgrimage, and reach'd the Haven where you would be; then you shall be satisfied for ever with the Pleasures of your Father's House, in whose Presence is the Fulness of Joy.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER VIII.

SIR,

LET not the Strength of your Passions discourage you; nor the Bigness of your Poverty overwhelm you, nor the Obstinate Perseverance of your Temptations and Afflictions make you despair: Cry unto God, *Thou art my Father, my God, and my strong Salvation: Through thee will we do great Acts, for 'tis thou that shalt tread down our Enemies.*

Remember that these are the noble Proofs of your Birth and Legitimacy, that you are a lawful Son and Heir: Nor do you seek Rest by Despair.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER IX.

SIR,

BE good to your self while you may, before the Mourners go about the Street and you sleep till the Resurrection.

If you will labour now, you shall rest for ever, and celebrate everlasting Triumphs: But if you suffer this Life to pass before you are dress'd and prepar'd for another, you shall weep for ever and ever, and put on Eternal Sorrows.

What though all this Life were one unmterrupted Joy, if you must afterwards dwell with Everlasting Burnings and the Worm that never dies?

Here you may purchase the Reward of Wisdom or Folly, Crowns or Fire, Eternal Joys and Happiness, or Lamentations, and Mourning, and Woe.

Therefore do good to your self while you may, and lay up Treasures where no Thief approaches; make the most of this Life, and manage your Eternal Interest to the best Advantage you can; be ever charm'd with the bright Prospect that is before you, and let Eternal Glories engage you to do and suffer every Thing to obtain them.

I am, Sir, &c.

LET-

LETTER X.

MADAM,

REmember the true Beauties are thoſe of Vertue, and a well-order'd Life: Thoſe of the Face and Perſon ſhall die with you, or before you. If you delight in Ornaments and Dreſs, let it be in thoſe of the Soul, and of a meek and quiet Spirit; which, in the Sight of God, is of great Price: Be chaſte, and you ſhall ſhine. Be humble, and you ſhall charm the Eyes of Wiſdom, and the Man of Underſtanding: Be charitable, and you ſhall be the Angel of the Poor, and the Servant of the Church: Be patient, and you ſhall be the Daughter of Peace.

Why ſhould any Thing delight you but Vertue, whoſe Features are perfect, and Lineaments exact, and whoſe Beauties are immortal? Not ſhall you ever be more beautiful than you are vertuous, be your Face, or Perſon, or Clothes, or Dreſs what they will: If you neglect it, you neglect your ſelf, and ſlight the greateſt Beauties, and the moſt provoking Rewards, and Heaven it ſelf.

And

And why ſhould you doat on Sin, a Folly that will undo you for ever, and make you weep eternally?

I am, Madam, &c

LETTER XI.

SIR,

WHY ſhould I warn you any more againſt the Deceitfulneſs of Pleaſures, than which, there is no greater Enemy to true Happineſs, and he that reſiſts them, crowns his Life?

If you ſeek for Maſtery, ſeek it over your ſelf; and the way to be a Slave to No-body elſe, is, to be one to your ſelf: Let it delight you to behold your Paſſions in Chains, and your Appetites bound; neither able to mutiny, or ſo much as murmur; and then you ſhall have done that which *Alexander* never did; you ſhall have conquered a World, a World of more Importance to you than the World.

This is a Victory you may boaſt of, and affirm you have out-done *Ceſar*, though no Hiſtorians or Orators have ſpoken of you.

I am, Sir, &c

LET

LETTER XII.

MADAM,

IF the Fear of Death haunts and ſcares you ſo much, what would it do ſtripped of that Vertue you labour after, and purſue, and in ſome meaſure have overtaken?

As you proceed in this Courſe, and perſevere, and hold out, you ſhall every Day leſs and leſs fear this Enemy, whom our Sins only have made ſo terrible. Your Body you ſhall never be able to reſcue from him; on which he will commit the ſaddeſt Outrages, and Inſults, and Affronts, till the Reſurrection in Chriſt ſhall reſtore its Beauty and Proportions; then you ſhall ſhine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of the Father, and you ſhall be rid of the Fears of a Second Death.

I am, Madam, &c.

LET-

LETTER XIII.

SIR,

TUrn your Eyes from looking downwards on that World that ſhall always delude and torment you, plague you and fool you; that is not only Vanity, but Vexation of Spirit, and an outrageous Dream.

And look up to your Heavenly Country, that's fairer than your Hopes, and brighter than your Fancy, and wider than your Deſires; where you ſhall celebrate Eternal Triumphs, and waſte eternal Joys, and behold the Beauties of Cherubims, and embrace Angels, and talk with Seraphims, and be beloved by the God of them all. Let the Thoughts of theſe Things raiſe your Soul above all this lower World, and ſoar it up to Heaven.

Let the Miſtakes you have already made, and the Miſeries you have much known, better your Underſtanding, fix your Choice, and make you lay out the ſhort Time to come, to the beſt Advantage, that you may wake before you die.

I am, Sir, &c.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

MADAM,

CAN the World amuze you with any Thing fairer than Vertue? Can it promiſe any Thing richer than Heaven? That ſhall be yours if you will be wiſe and good.

How often have you owned with Sighs, this World afforded nothing to make one ſincere Joy, or Ingredients for one laſting Comfort? Be ever of that Judgment, and be conſtant to your wiſeſt Thoughts.

What will your Beauties avail you, when Death ſhall come upon you, and the Grave open her Mouth? When the Silver Cord is looſed, and he whoſe Love for you was ſtrong as Death, ſhall not be able to endure the Sight of you any longer, and ſhall be contented to let you go all alone, for ever and ever, in the Dark, you know not whither?

I am, Madam, &c.

LET-

LETTER XV.

SIR,

WIth what Care and Induſtry did you endeavour lately to ſecure your Eſtate, when in danger? With how much greater ought you to ſecure your Soul from the many Dangers that threaten it?

If it be of greater Value to you, why ſhould not it be of greater Concern to you? How did the Sight of your Friend, lately deceas'd, amaze your Soul, convuls'd with an uncertain Hope, and a diſtracting Deſpair; and who you thought liv'd as well as you? Would you paſs out of this Life in the ſame Horrours, and car'd with the ſame Fears? If you would not, but would die eaſily, if not joyfully, eſteem all this World as nothing, and now immediately prepare for Death, as if the Phyſicians had given you over.

Nor can you forget how ſuddenly another of your Friends was ſnatch'd away, and how much concern'd you were at the News of it, in relation to his future State. Can you tell when you ſhall be call'd out, or how ſoon your Friends ſhall hear of you, but ſee you no more? Then

Then act immediately as if you had received a Mortal Wound, that can receive no Cure.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XVI.

MADAM,

IF you rejoice ſo much at your Recovery from your late Diſtemper, that treated your Beauties ſo ſeverely, how ought you to rejoice at your Recovery from the Corruptions of your Nature, and the Follies of the World, and the manifold Temptations of the Devil?

But let it not trouble you, that your Beauties are impaired, for you have ſtill as much Beauty as Vertue; and you, nor any elſe, ever had more: And if you will endeavour to be yet more vertuous, you ſhall yet be more beautiful, in ſpight of your late Diſtemper, which acted the part of a Friend, and cur'd you of your Vanity and your Danger; and did that for you which you were not able to do for your ſelf.

Moderate the Satisfaction you expreſs in the Succeſs you have lately had in your Affairs; for how elſe ſhall you be

prepar'd

prepar'd to receive the next News you may hear, which is, perhaps, that you are ruin'd, and when you ſhall hear it don't believe it; but ſay with St. *Auguſtine*, *I had been ruin'd if I had not been ruin'd*; that is, what I have loſt in my Eſtate, I have gain'd in my Soul; and what I have loſt of this World, I have gain'd of the other.

Phœbe, whom you lov'd, is recovered too, but *Naomi* has chang'd Worlds.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER XVII.

SIR,

YOU ſeem much alter'd in your Temper, ſince your Return to Town; you ſeem more melancholy and retir'd than you uſe to be; your Thoughts more contracted and inward.

Whatever has occaſion'd this Change, it matters not, for 'tis to your Advantage: Continual laughing is no more a Sign of a Man's Happineſs than Wiſdom; a Man may be very grave and very happy, very ſerious and very chearful; and indeed, there muſt be a conſtant Serious-

neſs,

neſs, to make a conſtant Chearfulneſs; of the Two, I had rather you ſhould frown than ſneer, but I approve neither.

I believe the Converſation of *Syncretus* has made ſome Impreſſion upon you, (for you are apt to receive all good Impreſſions) who is in Purſuit of every Vertue, and at War with every Vice; I know his Picture hangs in your Mind, and your Thoughts often ſtare at it, and though he is ſtill in the Country, you have brought him to Town with you, and have lodg'd him nearer to you, than in the ſame Houſe.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

MADAM,

YOur laſt to me miſcarried, as have, perhaps, ſome of mine to you: I believe its Contents were ſerious, and therefore uſeful and weighty.

You ſeldom write that in which the Soul is not concern'd, nor do you much care for reading that which has no Relation to true Wiſdom.

Be

Be ever of that Mind, for every thing else is Misery, or nothing.

Your last Distemper has divorc'd you entirely from the Care of your Body, and the Exactness of Dress. O happy Sickness! that has minister'd so much to your Health! Others return Thanks for their Recovery; do you for your Sickness too.

I believe you will now join with me, That the most afflicting, are the most gainful Favours of Heaven. You have Reason to acknowledge it, who have found it so.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER XIX.

SIR,

YOU say, you earnestly desire his Company in Town, whom you so much admire and imitate; and that you are uneasie without it; you have his Company when you think of him, and he yours, when he thinks of you. 'Tis our Minds, not our Bodies, that bring us together, and you are properly said to be there where your Mind is.

In

In this Sence, you may be in Heaven, nd your Body on Earth, you may tra-el and ſit ſtill; your Body may remain here 'tis, while you take the Wings of he Morning and remain in the utter-moſt Parts of the Earth, and ſome have arried their Bodies about them, un-known to them.

Let not the Obſtinacy of your Paſ-ons trouble you ſo much, 'tis the Na-ure of Vertue, for all Vertue is a Strug-le, and there is no Struggle where there no Oppoſition; and no Vertue where ere is no Difficulty, be you as obſtinate they; you in ſubduing, as they in utinying and rebelling; and the more ork they make you, the more the Vi-ory, and the greater the Reward: And erefore hereafter count it all Joy.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XX.

MADAM,

WHY ſhould I write to you any more of the Advantages of Old-age, which ou ſeem not to be eaſily convinc'd of. ou are contented to live long, but not be Old.

This

This is the Folly of Youth and young Wisdom, this is judging and condemning without a Tryal, but tell me first what is there in Youth that you are so fond of? Are there such Charms in giddy Ignorance? boiling Passions, raging Desires, mischievous Choices, heavy long Actions, hellish Lusts? But how great is the Peace of the hoary Head that has laid all these asleep, and ranged them into order, by Discipline and Exercise, and Experience, and the Grace of God, by many a Victory, and by many a Grapple, and by many a Defeat; by Anger and Contention, Labour and Religion, till at last a firm Peace is setled, by an entire Conquest and Subjection, and submitting to the Conqueror!

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER XXI.

SIR,

THough you are much a Philosopher, and a Christian, I shall write to you now of the Immortality of the Soul, of which I fear you are sometimes apt to doubt, though you scarce think

ink ſo your ſelf, much leſs would have hers.

You ſay, that what influences your ody, influences your Mind too, as the veral Changes of the Weather, Diet, ealth, Air, Sickneſs, the Plenty, or areity of the animal Spirits, Mirth and dneſs; and therefore you ſometimes ſpect they are all of a Piece, and live d die together, and if it be ſo, then is our Hope in vain, and if you are to die Morrow, your Buſineſs is to eat and ink to Day.

Stand forth and anſwer me now, hence are the Horrours of an ill Mind d an ill Action, all the World over, a curſed Execution, of a damn'd De-gn? Whence the Terrours of the Mur-erer without any Alteration in the eather, or his Health, or his Body, d though above the Laws, or out of e Reach of Diſcovery? Say, why no-ing can make a Man truly happy but oodneſs and Vertue, though in many nſtances of them, the Health of the ody is not much concern'd, as thoſe Juſtice and Charity? Say, whence the *tus & laniatus animi*, the Gripes and orrours, and the *furiales ſomni*, the ightful Dreams of the black and gloo-y Villain that's ſaid to believe nothing the Matter? Say, why the Murtherer

cannot

cannot be at reſt, if he be nothing but Matter? Say, why we believe another Life whether we will or no, and againſt our Wiſhes? Are all the Relations of Apparitions of the Departed, falſe? Is not the Mind often ſad, when the Body is in perfect Health, and chearful in Sickneſs? whence the diſmal Apprehenſions, or the joyful Expectations of the departing Perſon, according to his paſt Life? but as you are a Chriſtian, it were enough to tell you in our Saviour's Words, That *God is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living*; and that *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, are ſtill alive, and by the ſame Argument and by the ſame Authority, all the Dead are ſo too, and ſo in their Souls, and will be ſo in their Bodies too, in the Reſurrection.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XXII.

MADAM,

THat Freedom you allow me in writing to you, encourages me to be plain with you on all Occaſions, preferring the Truth and your Good, to Im-

pertinence

rtinence and Lyes; and becauſe you
e wiſe, it pleaſes you beſt.

Suffer me now to talk to you of
e Tenderneſs and Delicacy of your
x; and how cruelly and fooliſhly,
d perverſely 'tis manag'd. What Care
out the Body? What neglect about
e Soul; the true and only Seat of
ſe and Pain, of Miſery and Happi-
s? Nor do I excuſe the ſtronger
x in this Matter. How uneaſie is
ing a-foot to you, and plain Clothes,
d the Omiſſion of the leaſt Reſpect,
urſe Diet, and Work, though no-
ng contrary in all this, to the Will
God, to Nature, to Reaſon, and ex-
dingly agreeable to the Name and
the Example you are baptized in-
? The Life of the Son of God was
in and humble, and painful, cover-
with Affronts, overwhelm'd with
verty: And is it not enough for
e Diſciple, that he be as his Ma-
r? Will you refuſe to ſet your Foot
the Ground, on which the Holy
ſus, your Redeemer, laid his Sacred
ead, having no where elſe to lay it?
wake and tremble at all this damnable
ide and Wickedneſs, and Apoſtacy
om the Example and Precepts of your
eligion, from Humility, and Reſpect,
d Manners.

But ſuppoſing this Folly and Wick
neſs were allowable, What are the Adv
tages of it? What are the Miſeries avo
ed? What the Happineſſes gained the
by? You ſay, 'tis a very miſerable th
to go a-foot, and wear courſe Cloth
and to want Reſpect, and to wo
and you will labour hard to avoid
And 'tis pleaſant to do nothing, and
be carried, and to be well dreſs'd and
ſpected.

I ſay, there is no Miſery in the Fi
and there is no Happineſs in the
I ſay, Secondly, That all real Miſery
in Sin, and all true Happineſs from
tue. Are you ſo uneaſie at going a-fo
and ſo unconcern'd under the Racks
Conſcience, and the Gripes and Horro
of Sin? Are courſe plain Clothes ſo
flicting; and the Terrours, and Diſg
ces, and Miſeries of Vice ſo eaſy?
Induſtry and Labour ſo frightful? A
is there nothing diſmal, in being ſub
by our Sins and Debaucheries to the
ſults of Devils, to numberleſs and
ſupportable Miſeries and Troubles,
the Wrath of God, and the Scorn
Men, and to Deſpair? To an enra
Mind, and blaſted Hopes of Heaven,
haunting Fears of Hell? To the T
rours of the Night, and the Sadne
of the Day? To become a Stranger

Happin

ppineſs, and to be written all over, ithin and without, Lamentation, and ourning, and Woe? To have no Happineſs here, and to expect no Happiſs hereafter? To be rack'd with Miry here, and to expect infinite and erlaſting Miſeries hereafter?

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER XXIII.

SIR,

WHat you ſay of Health, is juſt; and you may prize it to its Value: But you muſt not diſparage the Advantages of Sickneſs, which is generally the beſt hyſick of the Soul.

If you ſerve God with your Strength, nd love him with your Health, they e happy Bleſſings: But if you eat to uxury, and the Converſation of your ealth is only to blaſpheme the God of our Strength, cenſure your Neighbour, nd murder your own Soul; 'twere beter for you to fall into the Hands of the hyſician, that your Skin lay next o your Bones, and to lean on the Staff f Sickneſs, and to walk on the Borders

of your Grave, or be humbled on you
Bed, by long Nights, and tedious Days
ſhort Sleeps, and long Watches; by th
Fears of Death, and Wearineſs of Life.

I am, Sir, &c

LETTER XXIV.

MADAM,

I Purſue in this, the Subject on whic
I wrote to you laſt; exhorting a
that are delicate and tender, to ſhe
it in the Care of their Souls; for a
Miſery is little to that of the Soul
and that's the Seat of Pleaſure: He wh
is miſerable there, is miſerable indeed
and he who is happy there, is happ
indeed.

What ſignifies all the rich Equipage
to a black, guilty Mind? To him
whoſe Sins make him go mourning
without the Sun, becauſe he frequent
ed the Houſe which is the Way t
Hell, leading down to the Chambers o
Death?

But if you love Paradiſe, and bound
leſs Pleaſures, and unmeaſurable Joys
be in love with Vertue, be nice and
delicate

delicate about your Soul: Here beſtow all your Care and Pains, and be as tedious and as endleſs as you can: Be tenderer of it than of the Apple of your Eye.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER XXV.

SIR,

I Still perſiſt to tell you, that Philoſophy is impertinent to Life and Happineſs; Elſe how ſhall the Ignorant and Children be ſaved.

I know you are fond of it; but when you have drunk enough, you will be weary of it, and own there is nothing comparable to the Demonſtration of the Spirit, and of Power. St. *Paul* treats it as I do: And when you have try'd its Strength, you will be convinc'd of its Weakneſs; you will own it is not able to ſubdue a Luſt, nor ſupport againſt the Miſeries of Life, nor tell you of Heaven: It will talk and think endleſs, and tire you with Diſcourſe, and put your Reaſon in a Sweat; and after all this, you ſhall be little the wiſer, or the better: And he ſhall out-wit you,

and out-live you by much, that know much leſs than you, if he but practiſe what he knows.

I am, Sir, &c

LETTER XXVI.

MADAM,

I Am glad you are ſatisfied in the Vexation of Vanity; and that nothing is Pleaſure, but Vertue; and nothing Senſe but Religion; and nothing great, but Living well.

And now let me go on, and tell you that Hardſhips and Mortifications of all kinds are pleaſant; and that the more you ſuffer in the Body, the more you enjoy in the Mind; they look ſowre, but they taſte ſweet; though they frown they are kind; and whenever you converſe with them, you will find them ſo. Faſt, and you ſhall eat Angels Food. Watch, and the Cherubim ſhall be nigh you: Obey, and Seraphims ſhall miniſter unto you: Humble your ſelf, and you ſhall be exalted: Be poor, and both Worlds ſhall be yours.

I am, Madam, &c

LET-

LETTER XXVII.

SIR,

I Own your Parts are ſtrong, and that you think with the Strength of a Man, and talk well, and thirſt violently after the true Wiſdom; but Philoſophy ſhall never quench that Thirſt, nor Talking, nor painful Thinking, nor the whole World, if it were yours, without the Labours of Conqueſt, and the Travails of Empire.

Remember, nothing is Wiſdom but Happineſs; and nothing is Happineſs, but Vertue and Religion: And I am ſure your Experience remembers it; and if you will practiſe accordingly, 'tis no matter whether you talk wittily or dully, or whether you ſpend ſo much Time and Spirits in Thinking. Nothing is Common Senſe or Intereſt, but a good Life; Vertue is the only true Wit; and to be a Chriſtian indeed, is to be happy indeed.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XXVIII.

MADAM,

YOurs I lately received: To which anſwer, That Life is very well, i we live it as we ſhould: An Infinit Goodneſs and Wiſdom has projected it and we could not be made to better Ad yantage. If you would have a Life with out Miſeries, you muſt have a Life with out Rewards too. Would you be re warded for your Eaſe? Should he tri umph, that never was in a Battel? Would you have Heaven for nothing? Do you reward any one for nothing? Or do you think it Senſe in him that expects it from you?

To the other part of your Letter, re lating to the late Loſs of your Friends and your Grief, and your Remarks on the Uncertainty of Life, I reply, That ſomething muſt be allow'd to Humanity, but more to Reaſon, and incomparably more to Religion. You ſhall ſee your beloved Friends again, at the Reſurrection: You ſhall behold thoſe Faces that were ſo dear to you, and whoſe Pictures hang in your Memory: They are at reſt, and do not envy them. If you ſorrow for your own Loſs,

Loſs, ſay ſo; and own, you weep for your ſelf.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER XXIX.

SIR,

YOU have no reaſon to complain of my writing ſo ſeldom to you, who, you know, am ready to ſerve you in whatever I am able.

I ſhould be glad to ſee you in Town as ſoon as your Conveniences will allow; and to talk to you of ſeveral Things you have hinted at in your Letter.

As to your Enquiry concerning the Strength of our Natures, and what they will bear; I believe we are, moſt of us, apt to impoſe upon our ſelves in that Point, and to fanſy we cannot bear the tenth part of what we can. How will the tendereſt of Women, and the greateſt Qualities, watch with a ſick Huſband, or Son; that without that Occaſion, would fanſy, the Loſs of Half an Hour of their uſual Reſt would ruin them; and yet, when forc'd upon a Trial, ſhall out-do a Watch-man?

What have Kings and Queens themſelves undergone in their Diſtreſſes, and Calamities, and Misfortunes? Even to the Out-ſuffering the meaneſt private Perſon. Of this, our Second *Charles* was an eminent Inſtance; and our Firſt *Charles* too. Therefore change your Thoughts on this Subject.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XXX.

SIR,

'TIS with juſt Admiration I behold the Progreſs your Siſter has made in Religion and Vertue; how ſhe has ſlav'd her Paſſions, and triumph'd over her Body; how chaſte her Eyes, how mild her Tongue, how ſhe faſts, how ſhe watches, how ſhe prays; how ſilent, how modeſt, how humble, how peaceable; what ſacred Beauty, what a Coeleſtial Air, what an Angelical Mein adorns her! Theſe are the Ornaments of Vertue, theſe the Charms of Religion, this the Attire of Holineſs, which no Dreſs can imitate, which no Art can counterfeit; for the Original is wholly Divine.

What

What vaſt Pains are taken in vain by others, to force a Beauty, and an Air, which nothing can give but Vertue and Piety, Humility and Chaſtity? May her Example ſpread; may her Vertues infect; may her Beauties charm to Imitation, and read ſilent Lectures of Vertue to her own Sex, and dictate ſoft Precepts, and admoniſh ſweetly, and inſtruct gently.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

MADAM,

BE juſt, and kind, and merciful to your ſelf: Have pity on your own Soul; let that be your biggeſt Care, and your tendereſt Concern: Remember 'tis of more value to you than the whole World, than Empire, or Pleaſures, or Riches: If you ſave that, you have ſaved all; if you loſe that, you loſe all.

I am, Madam, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

SIR,

WHether this will meet you as directed, I know not: However, 'tis likely it will meet you in another place, and give you Thoughts worthy of an immortal Mind, and a Soul that is greater than the Earth, and design'd for Heaven, and the Company of Angels.

Though your other Affairs be many, let your Soul ſtill be the greateſt; for in it you muſt be happy or miſerable through infinite Ages, and while God is God; and from this Life, it takes its Eternal Condition; and this Life, for ought you know, may be over before to Morrow, and your Lot caſt for ever. Therefore how does it ſtand you upon to *work while it is Day, before the Night comes, wherein no Man worketh?* As you value an eternal Happineſs, and boundleſs and everlaſting Joys; and as you dread an endleſs and a ghaſtly Miſery and Ruin, ſecure the main Chance: Look to the One Thing neceſſary, whatever you may loſe, whatever you may ſuffer in this ſhort Life, which will ſoon diſappear and vaniſh. But would you have the Happineſs you ſigh for? Would

you

you ſit down in immortal Pleaſures and Delights, and feaſt on the pureſt Joys, and perfect Beauties? In the Chriſtian Religion you ſhall find them all; in it the Deſires of your Soul ſhall be more than ſatisfied, Angels ſhall miniſter to you, your Paſſions ſhall ſleep, your Reaſon ſhall command; an ardent Faith, and glorious Hopes, and a flaming Charity, ſhall ſet you above all this World, that is leſs than what you expect, that is leſs than what you poſſeſs; in the Irruptions of Heaven, in the Viſits of the Spirit, that exceed all preſent Enjoyments that are worldly; in the Inundations of Divine Love, overflowing all the Soul with Joys unſpeakable, and never-fading Glories.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XXXIII.

SIR,

THE Contents of your laſt were not plain to me; but, in general, I read your holy Deſires, and the ſacred Temper of your Soul; how you burn towards Heaven, how you preſs through the narrow Way, how you grapple with

with your Passions, how you keep under your Body, and raise your Soul: These, I understand, are your Labours, these the rich Employments of your precious Time; from which no Pleasures can divert you, no Difficulties discourage you; but you proceed with the Obstinacy of a Christian, and the Peace of an Angel; now demolishing your Passions, now fortifying your Vertues, now praying, now reading, now singing divineſt Anthems, now meditating, now fighting, now raining, now sealing, now over-power'd, now pursuing; supported by Angels, strengthen'd by God, confirm'd by the Spirit, led on by the Captain of your Salvation, who himself was made perfect through Sufferings. And I rejoyce in your Travails, and over all your glorious Labours, which you have cover'd with so much Modesty.

I am, Sir, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXIV.

MADAM,

IF you feel the Pleaſures of Vertue growing in your Soul, and ſpringing up in your Mind, you are happy, and I am glad for your ſake: Now you begin to live, now you are awake, now your Profeſſion is turn'd into Life, and you practiſe your Faith, and act what you believ'd; and you are the better, and the wiſer, and the happier for being a Chriſtian, while you are no longer ſo in Name only, but in Experience, in Practice, in an operative Faith, and a lively Hope, and a flaming Charity; in Joys unſpeakable, and full of Glory. Let the Miniſtery of Angels ſupport you; let the Peace of God cover you; let the Hopes of Heaven inflame you to go on and perſevere, to be wiſe and happy to the End, to grapple with every Difficulty in the Way, to ſubdue every Oppoſition, to triumph over every Hardſhip, to preſs forward, and obtain the Prize. And let nothing diſquiet you while it goes well with your Soul; for if that be well, all's well, and you have Comfort enough to balance a Thouſand Miſeries. Peace of Mind,

Mind, and a lively Hope, and the Evi-
dence of Things not ſeen, will ſhin
through the darkeſt Cloud, and ſur-
mount the greateſt Occaſion of Sor-
row; for they are a Cordial for ever
Trouble, and a very preſent Help i
Time of Need; and without them, ev
ry Eſtate is ſad, and every Joy ſinks
the greateſt Riches, Poverty; the great
eſt Plenty, Want: Muſick cannot enter-
tain, nor Wine raiſe the Spirits, no
Company divert, nor Sleep refreſh ou
Minds, or throw off the ſullen Grie
that hangs like a Gloomy Miſt about ou
Souls.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

MADAM,

IF you would not have Heaven for
nothing, you muſt not think much
of the Labours of Vertue. If we plow
for common Bread, what ſhould we do
for the Bread of Life? If we toil for
an Earthly Inheritance, what ſhould
we do for an Heavenly, where the Joy
is Ecſtacy, and the Income infinite;
where Rivers of Pleaſure flow for ever;

where

where God, the Infinite Beauty, is ſeen Face to Face, and yet we live for ever; where there are Crowds of Angels, and Ten Thouſand times Ten Thouſand flaming Beauties; where the Martyrs ſhout for Victory, and the Confeſſors reſt for ever; where the Hermit feaſts on Everlaſting Joys, and faſts no more; where the Virgins ſhine with a double Glory, and a purer Light; where you ſhall be reſtored again to the vertuous Souls you ſo much lov'd? Now, What Toils are too great for ſo rich an Harveſt? Is not the very Hope a vaſt Reward? Is not the very Thought an Enjoyment? Is it not more than all this Life, to think of the other?

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER XXXVI.

SIR,

CONcerning Death, the chief Subject of your Letter, I muſt own the Antipathy Nature has to it, deſtroying its Beauty, and its Being, being the Friend of Rottenneſs and Corruption; but Religion is above Nature and Death too,

too, and triumphs over all the Deformities of a Diſſolution, becauſe it can never die; and gives Courage to the Soul to reflect on the ſtrange Change, without Amazement; for nothing can hurt but Sin, and Death is no Sin; it commits ſtrange Outrages on the Body, but cannot touch the Soul; it blots out Life, and with it all the Miſeries of Life; and at the ſame Time throws open a vaſt Eternity, and diſplays the Scenes of an immortal Life, which ſhall be fill'd with Happineſs: If we ſpend the firſt Life wiſely, it ſhall be one everlaſting Ecſtacy and Triumph; and then where is the Harm of that Death that ſhuts up one Life that is full of Miſeries and Troubles, and throws open another that is Glory, Honour, Immortality, and Eternal Life; where there are Rivers of Pleaſure for evermore, endleſs Torrents of Happineſs, and Joys unſpeakable, and full of Glory.

I am, Sir, &c.

LET

LETTER XXXVII.

MADAM,

BY your last Letter you seem to design suddenly for Town, if your Health will allow of Travelling. Where e'er you are, you are equally near, and equally distant from Heaven, if the Grace of God be with you; without which, you are exposed in the widest Desart, and in the closest Cell, to the Incursions and Devastations of the Enemy; and he who protects in the Desart, can protect in a City, and give you safety every where.

Oh! May the glorious Course of Life you are engag'd in hold out to the End, and prosper, for your own sake, and for your Sex's sake, while they shall behold the Beauty of your Manners, and be charm'd with your Life, and inflam'd to Imitation.

I am, Madam, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXVIII.

SIR,

I Muſt put you in Mind again, That this is not a Life of Reſt, and uninterrupted Eaſe; great are the Spiritual Pleaſures of Religion, but Temptations and Deſertions often interpoſe, and lie like Clouds before the Sun; and then the ſpiritual Joy ſucceeds again, and that gives way again to Dejection, this is the way of this Life, and in this it differs from the other, which is one eternal Flow of Happineſs, without Stops and without Ebbs, but here we muſt riſe and fall in the Succeſſions of Deſertions and Conſolations; but ſtill this increaſes our Reward in another Life, and enlarges our Crown, and Afflictions work for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. And therefore, though I have already ſo much, and ſo juſtly admired the Courſe you hold, and the Progreſs you make in Religion, yet let me warn you againſt being diſcourag'd by Dejection, of Spirit, or the manifold Temptations we muſt encounter in this World, but they ſhall quickly paſs, and Conſolation and Victory

ctory ſhall ſucceed, and remain intirely ours for ever.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XXXIX.

SIR,

THE Troubles I mentioned in my laſt, are every way to our Advantage, hey prove our Patience and Sincerity, hey eſtabliſh our Faith, they confirm ur Manners, and St. *James* bids us count all joy when we fall into Tryals (the urnace in which acceptable men are rov'd,) therefore be conſtant in your ryal, endeavour to ſtand the Teſt of emptations, of Afflictions, of Reproaches, of Neceſſities, of Diſtreſſes; theſe nlarge the ſpiritual Man, theſe raiſe his oul, and ſtrengthen his Spirit, and conrm his Mind; they perfect his Patince, and fortifie his Hope, and compleat his Experience, and the Work of which he has no need to be aſham'd; they nake his Faith manly and firm, and rong againſt the Attempts of the ſpiriual Enemy. And therefore, may you tand as a City built on an Hill, an Obect of Imitation and Admiration to all the

the World, who by you may learn how to follow Christ, let 'em admire the Chaſtity of your Manners, the Beauty of your Life, the Glory of your Hope, how you live, how you ſuffer, how you conquer, how you perſevere; let them copy your Patience, and tranſcribe your Prudence, and imitate your Faith.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XL.

SIR,

AS you are ſenſible of the Joys of Love and divineſt Charity, ſo you cannot but prefer them to every other Joy, to all that the World affords, or this natural Life can pretend to; I mean that Love that is of God, and returns to God, that inflames the Soul, that burns the Heart, and fires the Affections, and fixes them on the infinite Beauties of God and on his boundleſs Love, and all his other Perfections infinite, here gazing, here contemplating, here delighting to dwell for ever in Adoration and Praiſe, in Hymns and Thanks, in Love and Obedience.

I am, Sir, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLI.

MADAM,

THE Contents of your laſt are various, though all divine. I ſhall anſwer them as they lie. And firſt of Retirement. I am partly of your Mind, I own its Advantages very great, it helps Prayer, it ſeparates from the World, 'tis a Friend to Wiſdom, it purifies the Spirit, it ſtrengthens Meditation, but 'tis no longer neceſſary than God ſees it ſo, who is good to the Soul every where, and whoſe Spirit reaches it in every Place.

As concerning prayer, its Perfection is, never to ceaſe, to be always flaming to God a perpetual Sacrifice; a Fire that's always to burn upon the Altar of the Heart, though not in equal Degrees of Heat, for that, the humane Frame will not bear, nor does the Spirit ſo deſcend, but conſiders our Infirmity, and viſits us accordingly.

As concerning Mortification, I ſay, ſometimes the Body will bear more than we think, ſometimes not ſo much, and in this the immediate Spirit of God will direct an honeſt Soul, for neither he himſelf, nor any other humane Prudence can do it.

Touch-

Touching Conſtancy in Reſolution, you certainly ſee the change will be f the better, 'tis no Inconſtancy to chang but a proceeding from a leſſer Wiſdo to a greater, and theſe Changes are o ten unavoidable, and do not proce from Levity of Mind, but an ardent pu ſuit of that that's beſt, but all ligh Changes are utterly to be avoided.

Concerning Fortitude of Mind, the is a great Degree of it neceſſary in t Chriſtian Religion, that you be no abus'd and over-power'd by the Worl to bear up againſt Diſcouragements, keep on your way, and let this ſuffice Anſwer to your laſt.

I am, Madam, &c

LETTER XLII.

SIR,

LET not the ill Habit of your Bod trouble you much; that profits you Soul, 'tis better than Health, and wi admoniſh you better, and ſide with yo againſt the World. In Health we ar apt to forget the Duties of Religion and the Intereſts of our Souls, and th

Healt

ealth of our Minds, and purſue the reſent Intereſt, and the bewitching leaſure, and the Poiſnous Bate, but ckneſs makes the Mind ſevere, and it is averſe to Folly, and chuſes iſely, and purſues reſolutely, and re-ſes to be baffled by the World; its No-ons are all ſtrong, and it deals ſincere-by it ſelf; Folly is now grown nau-ous, and frightful, and nothing is ought of but Amendment of Life, d redeeming the Time becauſe the ays are evil and ſickly, and the Years are ow upon us, in which we have no leaſure; and Eternity approaches, like arm'd Man, and Death as he that avels, and we are forc'd to be wiſe, or be undone for ever, to live or die e-rnally, and he that would not uſe Re-gion as a Ship, is now forc'd to hugg as a Plank, and as his Life, while e deep Waters of Eternity are ready go over his Soul.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XLIII.

MADAM,

THERE is nothing formidable in h
mane Life, but what we make
by Sloth and falſe Opinions, of wh
your Experience will convince you, wh
ever you ſeem by your Letter to th
to the contrary, there is nothing for
dable but Sin, which is more formida
than Death it ſelf; becauſe it hath
ceſs to the Soul, and kills that that
immortal; beſides, all the real Miſeh
that can happen to the Body too,
from Sin, for elſe Sickneſs and Death
ſelf are not Evils in themſelves,
poiſon'd by Sin, and envenom'd by Gu
elſe the firſt raiſes the Mind, and
laſt ſets it free, the one prepares us
an eternal State, and the other ent
us into it; but Sin is the unſupporta
Miſery, that darkens and weakens t
Soul, and pollutes the Body, and ba
ſhes Joy, and doubles every Sorrow.

I am, Madam, &c

LET

LETTER XLIV.

SIR,

Our Letter came late to my Hands, and therefore the Return is late, I d you ſtill inſiſt on the Miſeries of ſe, and ſeem to be preſs'd with too eat a Senſe of them, but do not you ake Miſeries for your ſelf: There are ough to your Hands, and you need not e Help of Fancy and Opinion, but ra- er imploy your Reaſon and your Re- ion, to engage what really is in true me Life, and fight as a Chriſtian, for eater is he that is in you, than all the ſeries of Life put together, and is le to give you the Conqueſt in the ſt Tryal, and make your Peace as the ves, and your Joys as the Waves the Sea, but if you grow melan- oly, and diſtruſt the Succours of- d you, which are more than enough ſubdue the Difficulties that urge you, ur Caſe will be evil, and you will ve too great an Advantage to the E- my to ſpoil you, and Reproach you; o knows your ſtrength through God is fficient, if you will make uſe of it, d can only inſult you by the Advan- ge of Deſpair; the ſaddeſt Sickneſs of

the Mind, and the worſt Eſtate th
Soul can fall into, while ſhe invites th
Enemy to oppreſs her, and refuſes th
Goodneſs of God; but embraces So
row, and lies down willingly in her ow
Ruine.

I am, Sir, &c

LETTER XLV.

MADAM,

BE ſtill the ſame Example of your Se
and an Ornament of the Chriſti
Religion, let your Beauties grow, l
thoſe Charms you derive from Vert
never fade, let Chaſtity triumph, l
Religion make you glorious as the King
Daughter, and Piety as the opening
the Morning, nor may the Miſts of Vi
ever obſcure you, or cloud your Luſtr
may you ever be a Stranger to the Di
graces of Luſt, and the Reproaches
Sin, to the Horrors of Guilt and a dar
ned Mind, ſullied with Pleaſure, an
polluted with unlawful Joys, that o
reſs and murder, that feaſt and poiſon
that ſmile and kill, that when the
have abus'd the Body, come like a
armed Man upon the Soul; deſtroyin

s Glory, and wasting its Beauty, urning its Peace into Horrours, and s Joys into the Terrours of an Evil pirit.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER XLVI.

SIR,

I Cannot easily write so fully to you on the Subjects of your last Letter, s we might talk it together; you have inted at many things, and expect I hould be particular on each: this the Compass of a Letter will hardly permit, which should be short and strong, ree but not tedious, an Answer, not a reatise.

Of Conversation with Women, these re my Thoughts, That it cannot be manag'd with too much Caution, that t cannot be too little, too seldom, too hort, or too severe, this the Holy and the Rotten, the Skeliton and the Saint, they who have resisted to Glory, and they who have yielded to Corruption and Dishonour will easily grant; is our Vertue stronger than *David's*? Was not he lost at a Look? That obliged him to

take his Choice of the Sword, or t
Plague, or a Famine, to expiate th
Adultery and Murder, which drew the
Birth from the Glance of an Eye, th
had shed Rivers of Tears of Devotio
and that were always lift up unto t
Hills, from whence cometh Salvatio
Do you pray oftner than he? Or are yo
more in the Protection of God? The
fore beware.

Of Discourse, I say, that Too, ca
not be too little, nor too chaste, nor t
severe, because we must account f
every Word that is more than enough.

Of Passion, That it hurts our Neig
bour and our selves, that it is an Enem
to Reason and Peace, and therefore
be avoided in the Degrees of Sin, for
may be angry.

Of Sadness, That in great Degrees
greatly dangerous, but the Love an
Pity of God, who is infinitely tende
watches then in a special Manner ov
the Soul, to guard it against the dar
Suggestions of the Enemy, to comfort
to restore it, and cloath it again wit
the Garments of Joy. And, indeed
none can comfort now effectually, bu
God alone, whose Mercy and Love en
dures for ever. The rest shall be ano
ther Letter.

I am, Sir, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLVII.

MADAM,

IN Anſwer to your Laſt, I ſay, that Vertue is every Bleſſing, and Vice is every Miſery. From the firſt is Peace of Mind, a fearleſs Conſcience, the Triumphs of Innocence, the Courage of an honeſt Mind. From the latter, Plagues and Fears, dreadful Nights, and melancholy Days, Shame and Sorrows, Trouble and Deſpair. Therefore, Who would not chuſe the firſt, as Life; and dread the laſt, as Death? That overthrows all our Happineſs and Honour, and tears our Crown, and diſperſes our Glory, and makes us lie down in Confuſion and Sorrow, in Darkneſs and Terrours, in Loſs and Ruin; while Vertue is brighter than the Sun, and cheerful as the Morning, refreſhing the Mind, adorning the Soul, tranſporting with Hopes, raviſhing with Pleaſures; now triumphing over the World, anon leading the Fleſh in Chains; now ſubduing Armies of *Dæmons*, that abet the Intereſts of Vice; now ſcaling Heaven, and taking poſſeſſion of the Kingdom prepared for it.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER XLVIII.

SIR,

BE always revolving in your Mi the Greatneſs of the other Life, a the Littleneſs of this; ſo ſhall you always great and wiſe, fit to live, a fit to die. But if you abuſe your U derſtanding, and imagine all your I tereſts lie in this Life, and conſequen ly lay out all your Care upon it, ho will the Meſſengers of Death undeceiv you? When at the Death of your B dy, you ſhall find your Soul more ali and awake than ever, entring on immortal State, that ſhall laſt duri the Years of Eternity; in which yo ſhall reap the Fruits of your prefe Folly or Wiſdom, Underſtanding Miſtakes, Religion or Impiety.

I am, Sir, &c

LET

LETTER XLIX.

MADAM,

WHat can I write to you of more charming than Heaven? And of what more inſtructive, than of Death and Hell? The firſt is every Beauty, and every Pleaſure: The laſt is an infinite Miſery and Ruin, an everlaſting Deſtruction both of Soul and Body, a Woe as long as Eternity, without Intermiſſion, without End. And if the firſt be the Reward of Vertue and Religion, and the laſt of Vice and Impiety, how are we oblig'd by all that's happy or miſerable in our Beings, to think of theſe Things with all the Force of our Souls, fermented by the Grace of God.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER L.

MADAM,

AS often as you hear from me, I will endeavour, with the Bleſſing of God, that you ſhall hear of your Happineſs, and of your beſt Intereſt: And be true to your ſelf, as I am; be in love with that which will bleſs you for ever; let Chaſtity make you yet more beautiful, and charming, and Angelical; let Devotion defend you from every Evil, let Patience raiſe you above every Affliction, let Meekneſs adorn you, let Humility make you great, let every Vertue accompany you, and endeavour to be always ready for the Bridegroom's Comming.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER LI.

MADAM,

THE beſt Advice I can at preſent give you, in Anſwer to your laſt, is, always to think of Death, and the laſt Judgment; but ſo, as not to deſpair:

pair: Then ſhall the World become at to you, and it ſhall be crucified to ou, and you to it; you ſhall always e wiſe for your ſelf, and lay out the Remainder of your Time to the utmoſt dvantage: I will make you ſevere and rofitable to your own Intereſt, a Friend o your Soul, an Enemy to your Ruin, Servant ready for his Maſter's Coming. nd this one Advice is in the place of eve- y Advice, and will ſerve you inſtead of many Books, and much Reading; and each you in a Moment, all you can learn n an Age.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER LII.

SIR,

YOU will forgive the Delay of my Return to your Laſt, and accept it when I can ſend it. Let Patience and the Grace of God rule your preſent Miſeries, be violent in Prayer, increaſe in Charity, contend with your Afflictions, and with your ſelf, be inſtant in Repentance, multiply your Vows, be humble without Bounds; read, meditate, practiſe, conferr, do, and ſuffer as a Chriſtian,

Chriſtian, and let Patience have its pe
fect Work: Let the Thoughts of an
ther Life inflame you with the moſt g
nerous Reſolutions; let nothing o
lige you to deſpair, believe all Thing
hope all Things, Remember the Af
ctions of the Apoſtles, but chiefly
their Maſter, whoſe Sufferings exceed
all Men's? and you will rejoyce in yo
Portion, and turn your Prayers in
Praiſes, and your Tears into Pſalms an
Muſick.

I am, Sir, &c

LETTER LIII.

MADAM,

I Can neither converſe nor write to yo
ſo often as I would, nor do you ne
being writ to ſo often as I do: B
your Modeſty is greater than mine,
you exceed me in every Thing el
but in nothing more than in Humil
ty, the Foundation of all Vertue, t
Pillar of Holineſs, the Ornament a
Security of a good Life. Proceed
the Courſe you walk, and proſper; l
Piety crown your Head, let Charity i
flam

flame your Heart, and let every Vertue adorn you.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER LIV.

MADAM,

SO may you proſper for ever, as you perſevere in the Way you have begun; for many Heavens ſhall meet you in that Way, and an Eternal Heaven at the End; Angels will accompany you, the Spirit of God will lead you, immortal Hopes will tranſport you, and Joys unſpeakable and full of Glory ſhall entertain you all the Way; the Path that burns with Love, and flames with Joys, will lead you to Crowns and Ecſtaſies, to Angels, and to Peace; to Brightneſs, and to Glory; where you ſhall triumph with the Apoſtles, and rejoyce with the Martyrs, and behold the Beauty of the Virgins, and the Glory of the Confeſſors, who trod the mighty Way, and were broke upon many Croſſes, but were ſupported by the Love of *Jeſus*, the Leader of our Sufferings, the Shield of our Salvation;

tion; who ſtands by, and numbers our Sighs.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER LV.

SIR,

TO the Second Particular of your laſt, namely, the various Changes of our Temper in a Religious Courſe of Life, I think you need not be much concern'd at them, if you are conſtant in your Sincerity; for your Body is not in your power, nor can you be always in the Taking you would be; and this without any Harm to your Vertue or Happineſs, that will live and thrive beſt in Storms and Uneaſineſſes, and is ſlacken'd by Eaſe and Pleaſure, and improv'd by Difficulties and Adverſities, by Temptation and Sickneſs. Therefore let nothing but the Diminution of your Vertue trouble you, and a Decreaſe of Manners; for this is juſt Matter of Trouble, and a Rational Grief: But unleſs you have this, you have none at all. And though you may be troubled, with St. *Paul*, yet you are not caſt down; but rather, you have much

much Reaſon to rejoyce that you are ſtill in the right Road, and keep your Way, though it be not ſo pleaſant and eaſie as at another Time, nor you ſo vigorous and lively.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER LVI.

MADAM,

I Eaſily read the Change of your Condition in your Laſt; but this muſt not be any more. I do not expect you ſhould always laugh: But I could be contented ſtill to ſee you ſmile, and never to go thus heavily, though the Enemy oppreſſes you. Let the Everlaſting Reward encourage you: Remember you ſhall die, and all your Troubles ſhall die with you; and you ſhall change this Valley of Miſery, for numberleſs and almoſt intolerable Joys, and for the Society of Angels, and Virgins of Martyrs, Penitents and Confeſſors; who gave their Lives and their Deaths, their Bodies and their Souls to God. Hither contend with all the Wings of Devotion, travel faſt on this Road,

Read, and your End shall be happy for ever.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER LVII.

SIR,

TO the rest of your Letter, I answer, That this Life is neither tedious nor short: If you are miserable, 'tis long enough; if you live well, you shall live better in another Life. The Infinite Wisdom has proportion'd it to our several Conditions; and we must not wish it otherwise, without Blasphemy, and an implicite saying, our Wishes are wiser than Providence; and we, than he who made us; and the Clay, than the Potter.

Of the Relishes of the Mind, I say, 'tis its Happiness that this World tastes flat, and every Thing in it; and not the Misery and Disappointment of a Man: For, who abus'd him, that this World was Happiness? Or if any one told him so, why did he believe? Is any Information surer than our own Experience? Taste and see that 'tis the the World it self; For Happiness will

not

not crucifie and disappoint, as you see the World does: But all the while, 'tis our Interest to do so; and 'tis better to be plagu'd into Wisdom, than always continue a Fool. If this World gave us the Satisfactions we expect in it, we should quit our Pursuit after another, and our Faith would wither, and our Hope would be no more, and our Charity would be to our selves, and an infinitely greater Happiness would be slighted and lost, and Heaven would court in vain, and we should rest contented with nothing, and despise the great Designation of our Being, and take up with a trifling Happiness for ever.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER LVIII.

MADAM,

I Cannot be so punctual in my Returns to yours, as you expect; nor can I write when I would: Let this suffice, in Answer to your last, That you may expect the best Offices from me, that I am able (by the Assistance of God) to perform for you. I know how

how much your Soul is inflam'd towards Religion, how much you love to live, how much you hate to talk, how charm'd with sacred Solitude, that adds Fire to our Prayers, where we meet the Angels, and have a clearer View of Heaven: There your Charity burns in Intercessions, and you contend by Prayer for the Welfare of the whole World, and pour out such Devotions as the World is the better for, and happy are they that have a particular Interest in them. Then you desire to hear from me, who have so often wish'd to be with you, that I might be instructed by your Prayers, and burn with your Discourse, and imitate your Heaven, whom the Angels love to accompany, who feeds on Prayer, and feasts on Fasts, and mixes Life with Heaven.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER LIX.

SIR,

Since my laſt to you, ſeveral Things have happen'd that delay'd the Paper I now ſend you. In Anſwer to your laſt, I return, That the Goodneſs of God is univerſal, and diffuſes it ſelf through every Inſtance of Life. A wicked Age is no Objection againſt his Providence, nor leſſens his Goodneſs; whoſe Doings are infinitely good, and extracts Good out of all that he ſuffers: If Sin abounds, the aſtoniſhing Mercy of God abounds much more: If the Age be outrageous, and rebels againſt the Command of the Moſt High, then the Patience of God exerts it ſelf beyond all Bounds, and acts in all the Extents of Infinity, and is greater than the Heavens, and arreſts his Juſtice; and even when Wrath is gone out, re-calls the Judgment, and turns the Thunder, and ſtifles the Lightning, and ſtill the Sun ſhines, and the Early and the Latter Rain deſcends, and the fruitful Harveſt follows, and the Sinner reaps as he that prays, and his Boſom is full of the Bleſſings of God, and his Children are ſatisfied

ſatisfied with Bread: And now ſhall his Infinite Mercy and Goodneſs be taken up as an Argument againſt his Being? And becauſe he is infinitely merciful and good, ſhall we ſay he is not? This be far from us: But let his Mercy prove his Being; and his Love, that he is God. And this I do not write for your ſake, who deteſt the Ingratitude of the Argument, and the Villany and Folly of the Objection, and the Abſurdity of the Diſcourſe; but for theirs who turn his Love againſt him, and play his Mercy againſt his Being, who is God Bleſſed for evermore; and for whoſe infinite Mercy and Love may we praiſe and magnifie him for ever.

I am, Sir, &c.

LET

LETTER LX.

MADAM,

Orgive him this late Anſwer, who owes you ſo much Love and Admiration, and who is willing to ſerve you beyond his Power; if I do not write ſo often as you would have me, 'tis not that I ſlight her who is the Ornament of the devout and fairer Sex, who reigns in Beauty, and triumphs in Piety, and has put on all the Glories of Vertue, and the Ornaments of Religion, and the Happineſs of Retirement, ſacred to Contemplation and Prayer, to Hymns and Praiſes, to holy Reading and devout Conferences.

There you vouchſafe to hear from him, who is fitter to be inſtructed by you, in the Conqueſt of the World and ones ſelf, in the Reduction of the Paſſions, in reſtraining Folly, and exerting the Powers of Wiſdom, but this is your Humility, the Crown of all your Glory, and the Perfection of every other Vertue, without which nothing is beautiful or laſting.

I would recommend to your Retirement, St. *Jerom's Læta*, and his *Paula Romana*, and the wondrous Inſtructions he

he gives, if you needed them, but your Life has read 'em and transcrib'd 'em already; and Life surpasses all Reading and Knowledge, for 'tis the End of both, and therefore is nobler than the means, and others may read you with Advantage, and study how to imitate you, to grapple with a Temptation, to discover the Snare, how to quench the fiery Dart, how to resist even unto Blood, striving against Sin, to despise this World for a better, to rejoice in Hope, to be patient in Tribulation, to continue instant in Prayer, and to do and suffer all the Will of God, for these are your holy Exercises, these the Labours of your Love, and if you persevere you shall be crown'd, and the manifold and obstinate Temptation shall enflame your Victory, and inglory your Triumph, which cannot be celebrated for doing easie things, and suffering nothing, but when the Grapple is terrible, and the Difficulty obstinate like the Labours of *Bonosus*, describ'd by the fame St. *Jerom*, or like his own, or yours.

I am, Madam, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXI.

SIR,

WHen you come to Town our thoughts will be easier exchang'd on the subjects of your last; in the mean Time, I shall give you all the Satisfaction I can by Letter, for you know my Readiness to serve you as far as I am able, and I know your Humility, to desire it when you are able to direct.

If I must give my Advice and Judgment in Answer to what you propos'd in yours, I shall do it with that Modesty that becomes my Weakness, and with that Humility that becomes one that can do nothing of himself.

Though you fill the Leisure of your Time, and the Hours that are your own with the best Exercises, yet something there must be more immediately relating to settled Work and Labour: This St. *Paul* has said before me, this the wisest Directors of the first and purest Ages of the Church, and the Necessity of it your own Experience will evince. The ancient Religious Institutes of *Egypt* asserted the Unlawfulness of any Man's living but upon his Labour, though his Estate and Patrimony were never so large;

large; unleſs impotent in his Strength and unable to comply with the Apoſtolical Precept, and 'tis ſaid of the wondrous *Paul*, That notwithſtanding all his Devotions and religious Exerciſes; he was not able to ſuſtain the Tediouſneſs of Time, and was therefore directed by an Angel to interpoſe bodily Labour when he was juſt quitting his Retirement; how many Vices are owing to the want of ſomething to fill up our Time that's lawful and uſeful? Tis this that fills the Taverns and the Coffee-Houſes, thoſe Schools of Vice and Idleneſs, that devour our Virtue and our Time. Hence the Folly of Gaming, and the Miſchiefs and Loſſes which by ſome is drawn out into Toil and Labour, and Watching; hence inveterate Habits of tireſome Idleneſs and doing nothing, or ſomething that's worſe than nothing; hence Swarms of Temptations, and the Opportunities of the Tempter, hence the idle Lives for the moſt part of Perſons of Quality and Eſtate of both Sexes, that they are in a manner uſeleſs to themſelves and to the World, hence Hours and Days, and whole Years ſacrific'd to Idleneſs and Impertinence, and Debauchery, hence all the miſchievous and the wretched Shifts to waſt their Time, and

with

ith it their Lives and Eſtates, hence lours and Days of dreſſing and un-reſſing, of giving and receiving the nſeleſs and impertinent Viſit; but this all eur'd by a ſettled Courſe of In-uſtry and Imployment, to our own ood, and for the Good of the World, which our Lives would be far more ſie and uſeful, profitable and pleaſant.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER LXII.

MADAM,

ET me tell you in Anſwer to your laſt, that the Chriſtian Religion is ain and eaſie, unconcern'd in parts Learning; as its Myſteries are Mat-rs of Faith, and equally exceed all mane Capacities; ſo its Precepts are ain, and calculated to the meaneſt pacities, and Simplicity and Humi-y are far better Diſpoſitions for the riſtian Religion, as to Faith or Pra-ice, than all the Parts and all the arning in the World, what has Life do with Diſputes, or Obedience th Contention? He knows enough

who lives well, and a Sinner kno
nothing to the Purpoſe, or as
ſhould, Faith and Humility are
Learning of the Chriſtian Religio
and not Science falſely ſo call'd,
Philoſophy is Obedience, and Purity
Manners, and in the Chriſtian Religio
he who lives beſt is the greateſt P
loſopher, and he who is proud, unde
ſtands nothing; for Pride is the dee
eſt Ignorance of ones ſelf and eve
thing elſe, and Humility underſtan
and practiſes every thing aright.

Therefore let not the Want of Le
ning diſcourage you, or any one el
the greateſt Saints that have been
the Church of God, were far from
ing the greateſt Scholars; nay, ma
of them were ſtrangers to Learni
and yet had a Knowledge that
above all Learning, having the
ction of the Spirit that teacheth
things, and reveals the moſt hid
Myſteries, and enables to do and
fer the greateſt things, and makes
true Hero's and Philoſophers, and c
ferrs the true Wiſdom and Learni
not that which talks, but that wh
lives, and will make us live for ev
and this was the Learning of the Ap
ſtles themſelves, and of their firſt, gr
and Holy Succeſſors, and of the co
m

on Body of the first and best Chri-
ans, and Oh! That it were the Lear-
ng of *Christendom* at this Day, and
t that Time were spent in Holi-
s, that's spent in unnecessary Rea-
g and curious Studies, that make a
n neither truly wiser, or better,
would be much better employed
Prayer and Charity, in holy Li-
g and preparing for the Hour of
ath, when all our Learning shall
, and our Piety and Holiness shall
crown'd, and shall last for ever;
e, with the Blessing of God, endea-
ur to employ your Time, and the
ward will answer your Pains, do you
dy how to be sav'd, how to secure
aven and avoid Hell, how to follow
e Footsteps of Christ, and of his
ostles, to be like the good Ground,
like the wise Virgins, and like the
n that built his House on a Rock,
like the wise Servant that was al-
ys ready for his Master's coming,
these things are more necessary than
eat Reading, and useless Study, which
ke up a great deal of Time and La-
ur to little Purpose.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER LXIII.

SIR,

LET nothing ſhake your Reſolut
once fix'd, provided 'twas fi
with Conſideration and Prayer,
conſtant, or you'll do nothing but ba
ward and forward; an indifferent W
dom put in Practice, ſhall ſtand
more ſtead than a ſtronger that's w
vering; in this Inſtance the *Spania*
are great Sufferers, they have Wiſd
enough, perhaps, none more; but th
ſpend it in Counſel not in Practice, a
they continue conſidering backwa
and forward, weighing the Matter
Gold Scales, till the Enemy have ex
cuted; and then they proceed to
ction, when there is nothing to
done, but much to ſuffer, caſt yo
Counſels which Way you will, a
with ne'er ſo long Delays; yet ſt
there ſhall Difficulties and Objectio
remain, therefore this is no Objectio
againſt Conſtancy in ſpeedier Cou
ſels.

I am, Sir, &c.

LET

LETTER LXIV.

MADAM,

A Muſe your ſelf no longer with the preſent Turn of the Age, and the ſhion of your Sex, but conform ur ſelf to the Wiſdom of your Bap- m, and to the Sacrament and Obli- tion you then undertook, and put the Manners of the Chriſtian Religi- , and then you ſhall be as happy as ur Soul can reaſonably wiſh; you ſhall ar the Beauties and the Triumphs of aſtity, and act the Victories of Reaſon, d put on all the Glories of Vertue, d the Rewards of a conſtant Faith. you love Pleaſure, and Honour, d Riches, ſeek them from Vertue, ldreſs your ſelf to the Chriſtian Re- gion, which will be laviſh in an- vering your Deſires, and more than ench your Thirſt, you ſhall live in e Enjoyment of no mean Happineſs, d in the Expectation of boundleſs and erlaſting Joys; ſuch as fill the Angels, d infinitely exceed all that we know, ou ſhall feed on the Beauties of God, nd dwell upon his Glories inutterably diant, and waſte eternal Ages in the alaces of Light and Joy.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER LXV.

SIR,

CONcerning the Management of yo
Worldly Affairs, and the Diſtu
bance it gives your Religion, all th
I can ſay, is, That you muſt at a
Rate ſecure the laſt; becauſe it is yo
Life, and your Soul, and your eter
Happineſs or Miſery; you had bet
be undone in this World than in t
other; for there is no Compari
betwixt a ſhort Poverty, and an ev
laſting Burning.

Do what you can ſafely for t
Support of this Life, for to that y
are obliged by the Apoſtolical P
cept, and the pureſt and ſevereſt I
ſtitutes of the firſt Religious Societi
particularly thoſe of *Egypt*, that
clared, whoever does not ſuſtain himſ
ſubſiſts upon Charity, (to which no
but the impotent have a Right) n
though he lives on his own Eſtate. B
ſuch Cares as choak the Word, or m
it unfruitful, or ſtifle the Soul, or
ver-load the Mind, are undoubtedly
be cut off, and uſed like heavy loa
ing in a Storm, which though ne

ſo Rich, when the Ship's in Danger, muſt be heav'd over-board.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER LXVI.

MADAM,

I Say again, with that Freedom you have always allowed me, that nothing but Religion ſhall give you the Peace you ſeek, and the reſt you long for; if you ſeek it in the World, you are as wiſe as he who in the midſt of a Storm ſhould lay himſelf down to ſleep on the Top of a Maſt. Therefore let this Deluſion at laſt have an End, and put on the Strengths of Wiſdom, and apply your ſelf where you may ſucceed to your Satisfaction; for Vertue is loaded with Pleaſures, and overflows with Happineſs, and is crowded with Joys ſofter than your own delicate and tender Soul, that would fain be united to true Beauty, and Wiſdom and Peace.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER LXVII.

SIR,

IF the Miseries of this Life seem so uneasie to you, how can you endure to think of those of the Life to come? Miseries that have no Bounds, and that have no End, where the Horrour is Infinite, and the Torment everlasting, where the Worm never dies, and the Fire never goes out, where our Pains shall be new after the Sufferings of a Thousand Ages, and always beginning, where all Hope of Ease is banish'd for ever, and nothing left but everlasting Fires and Despair, a raging and a burning Eternity, that will rack us with a Thousand Deaths; but for ever deprive us of the Happiness of dying.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER LXVIII.

MADAM,

BE as much in Love with Pleaſure as you will, ſo you ſeek it in Religion, where alone it is to be found; it will feaſt your Soul, and bath your Mind in the richeſt Joys, and you ſhall feed as the Angels feed, and the Hopes of another Life ſhall crown you little ſhort of them, and the Hope ſometimes ſhall be Ecſtaſie, and unruly Joy, an impatient Deſire of Death and eternal Life, that you may be drown'd in Love, and overwhelm'd with Beauty, and drench'd in an Ocean of Joy, and act eternal Triumphs in the Palaces of Light and Glory, where the Light of the Sun ſhall be Seven-fold, and you ſhall be dazzled with the Beauty of Millions of Cherubims and flaming Angels, and radiant Seraphims, that hide their Beauties now; though they miniſter to you, and are about your Path, and about your Bed, and haunt you every where for good, miniſtring to the Heirs of eternal Salvation.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER LXXIII.

LETTERS
OF
Religion and *Vertue.*

PART II.

LETTER I.

MADAM,

MAY you never repeat the Complaint of your last, that your Sex is wrong'd of its Share of Learning and Knowledge: A Complaint unworthy of the Masculine Strength of your Judgment, of your better Christian Education, and of the Hopes of Glory, and an entire Happiness hereafter.

If

If you live as you design, you are happy; every Blessing will surround you, every Joy will court you, and the Desires of your Soul shall dwell with you.

I own, great are the Beauties of Learning, ministring to Religion and Piety, to Manners and Life: But separate from this End, 'tis painful Trash, laborious Impertinence; that makes a Man neither the wiser, nor the better. Nor does any Thing deserve the Name of Learning, but the Knowledge of the Christian Doctrine well liv'd: This is the Perfection of Learning, ard Wisdom, and Knowledge; and besides it, there is none other. And this Learning is yours in a fair Measure, and in the Hopes of a vast Improvement. And be persuaded, whomsoever you out-live, you out-know; whom you excel in Vertue, you excel in Learning; only he has studied and toil'd more than you, to less purpose: His is a labour'd, studied Ignorance; and yours is a practical Knowledge, of vast Advantage, and solid Use, securing all the Happinesses, and grasping all the Interests of this Life, and of that to come.

This, I think, is a satisfactory Answer to yours; and I shall desire no

other

other Return, but that you and your Sex would be eaſie and happy in it.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER II.

SIR,

I Expected to have heard from you ſooner, but I believe your Leiſure would not permit: Nor ought I to have expected it, but when you had nothing elſe to do than to throw away your Time upon me who am the leaſt of all Men.

I rejoyce to hear of the Recovery of your Brother's Health, and that your Siſter has chang'd her Reſolution, and that you perſiſt in yours. You have taken away the Hopes I had of ſeeing you in Town, and enjoying your Company, being now more likely to ſee you in the Country.

As I never have writ to you of News yet, ſo you will not expect any from me now. Let it ſuffice us, that the World is in the Hands of an infinite Wiſdom, that cannot err in its Conduct; ſupported by an infinite Power,

Power, that cannot be insulted; acting by an Infinite Goodness, that loves and forgives to the utmost, whose Bounty and Mercy have no Bounds. 'Tis he who manages the great *Opera* of the World, and shifts the Scenes to his own Glory; which neither the Successes of a Villain, nor the Calamities of a Righteous Man can impeach: Nor can it receive an Addition from the Confusion of the first, or the Triumphs of the last; because it is infinitely great from all Eternity: And the last Scene will vindicate the Conduct of all the rest, and demonstrate a just and regular Providence throughout the whole.

Let these Considerations entertain us better than News, and settle us in a perpetual Peace, and Satisfie us in every Event; knowing that all things minister to the Glory of the Governor of Heaven and Earth, who will assert his own Eternal Wisdom, and plead the Cause of the Righteous, and defend the Poor, and punish the Wrong-doer.

I am, Sir, &c.

LET-

LETTER III.

MADAM,

I Am ſtill oblig'd to ask your Pardon for the Delay of my Anſwers; which you are ſtill ready to grant, by a Goodneſs that charms all that are acquainted with it.

The late Advantages you have received in your Fortunes, I know, will not be able to change your Mind from humble to vain, from modeſt to arrogant, from obliging to intolerable. Changes that have been made in ſome, upon ſmaller Occaſions, and the Loſſes they have ſuſtain'd in their Souls, have far exceeded their other Advantages.

But ſo, I know, it will not be with you, whoſe Vertue is deeper rooted, and higher grown, and is able to ſtand the Shock of greater Temptations, and turn them into Victories and Triumphs.

I know you are able to comfort the Misfortunes of your Friend, without my Aſſiſtance. Let your Vertue inſtruct him; let your Diſcourſes ſtrengthen him; let a ſhort Life, and a long Eternity admoniſh him concerning Humane

mane Things, and give him the juſt Value and Contempt of them; that when we have them, they may not have us; and we muſt be always as ready to part as they: And thus ſhall they ſerve us, and not we them: It ſhall neither be in their power to raiſe or depreſs us, to make us more or leſs than we were. And thus ſhall they do the Duty of Servants, and we act the Part of Maſters, and maintain a Conſtancy in our Vertue and Happineſs.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER IV.

SIR,

BEing uncertain where to direct to you, I was the leſs forward to write, becauſe I would not write in vain; elſe you had heard from me ſooner, and receiv'd this Trouble long ago.

The Freedom you us'd in your laſt was very pleaſing to me; and every Thing in it was Entertainment or Inſtruction.

The

The happy Retirement you enjoy, is no ſmall Bleſſing. There you converſe with your ſelf, and with your Happineſs; with preſent Joys, and future Hopes; while Noiſe and Impertinence keep their juſt Diſtance, and whatever elſe diſturbs the Peace of Life.

But he who chearfully ſtands on the Poſt which God has aſſign'd him, and acquits the Duty he is employ'd in, whatever Troubles attend it, is the beſt and greateſt Man, and lives to the greateſt Rewards, and ſhall be ſure to have them larger than his weak Brother, that cannot bear an Impertinence, nor endure a Noiſe, nor maintain his Peace in a Storm; but his Mind is preſently ruffl'd, and his Philoſophy diſcompos'd, and his Religion cruſh'd and diſorder'd. And, indeed, it muſt be a ſtrong, well-built Vertue and Life, that can ride it out ſecure, in the Tempeſt of the World, without being driven from its Anchors, and ſadly damag'd in the Storm.

I would not have you be too ſolliciteous concerning the Welfare of your Brother, though you have not heard from him in ſo long a Time. Commit him to his Care and Goodneſs, to which

which you commit your ſelf, and the reſt of your Concerns.

If his Vertue be equal to yours, ſo is his Happineſs, where e'er he is; whether ſcorch'd in the South, or frozen in the North; whether in Sickneſs or Captivity, Poverty or Contempt: For all theſe are the Friends of Happineſs, being the Friends of Vertue, and a Maſculine Religion.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER V.

MADAM,

I Was loth to loſe the Opportunity of writing to you by the Bearer, who offer'd his Service, and told me, it would not be unacceptable to you.

As many as are acquainted with your Vertue, deſire to converſe with it, though at a diſtance: And for that Reaſon you receive this Trouble from me now unwilling to miſs ſo fair an Occaſion.

Though the greateſt Happineſs lies in the Practice of Vertue, yet it is no mean one to diſcourſe of its Beauties, and entertain our ſelves with its Heavenly

venly Nature and Effects, how it bleſſes and preſerves the World, how near allied to Heaven and our Souls, how crowded with Joys, and loaded with Hopes; how all our Happineſs and Intereſts are wrap'd up in it, the Peace of this Life, and the Glory of the next; what Beauty it gives to the Mind, how it adorns the Body, how high above all the Pretences of Birth, and Fortune, and Power; how it alone can make us happy; and how without it, nothing; how it is able to vanquiſh every Sorrow, and triumph over every Miſery; how it guides Life, and inſults Death, and acts an Eternal Triumph in the *New Jeruſalem*. With theſe Conſiderations we entertain our ſelves above any other; and none ſo fit to entertain us, as they: Nor can they be diſpleaſing to you, whoſe Soul is daily fed by them, and from whence you derive your pureſt Joys, and ſuch as charm your very Sleep, and bleſs your Slumbers, and render your Days as the Days of Heaven.

I am, Madam, &c.

LET-

LETTER VI.

SIR,

THough your laſt deſired nothing but what was juſt and reaſonable, and though your Deſires, with me, are always Commands, yet I cannot entirely comply with them; of the Reaſon of which you are not altogether ignorant, and therefore you will the eaſilier excuſe me.

'Tis our Religion to comply wherein we can, and we are obliged to it by our Duty; but farther we are excuſed.

'Tis with no little Satisfaction that I always think of our laſt perſonal Converſation: Nor am I without Hopes of many more of the ſame Nature and Happineſs. If we are juſt to our ſelves, we ſhall promote them as much as we can; to which, I know, your pious Diſpoſition will very much incline you.

I am not unmindful of the Truſt you have repoſed in me, but ſerve you in that Affair to the utmoſt of my power; as likewiſe in every Thing elſe, as far as I am able; and no farther will you expect from me.

Let

Let not the uncertain State of your Health grieve you; but rather rejoyce in all the Miſeries of this Life, as the greateſt promoters of the Happineſs of the next. Remember, whatever the Body loſes, the Soul gains: And there is no Compariſon betwixt the Eaſe of the one, and the Advantages of the other. To be truly ſick, is to be vicious, to loſe the Peace of our Minds, and the Influences of God upon our Souls; to be proud and paſſionate, covetous and fearful. Theſe are real Diſtempers, and afflict ſorely; and the Patient has Reaſon to groan, and complain bitterly. But this, I think, is not your Caſe, who have plac'd your Health in your Soul, not in your Body.

The Remembrance of the Flames of Hell, and of the Miſery that never dies, will greatly abate the Pains of Sickneſs; which, compared with the others, appear as none. But nothing ſo effectually comforts, as the Divine Aids and Aſſiſtances, that relieve us in the greateſt Miſeries. 'Tis this that makes all our Bed in our Sickneſs, and cool'd the Martyrs in the midſt of Flames, and warm'd them in the Frozen Waters, and has ſung Anthems of Joy and Praiſe, upon

on the Rack, to him who is mighty to ſave.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER VII.

MADAM,

BY the Date of this, you will find, I have not delay'd to anſwer yours, which was not unwelcome to me, as never any were from you, which always bring their Entertainment with them.

I cannot pretend to give you the Satisfaction you expect on the Subjects your Letter inſiſts on, being various and important, worthy of an Holy and a Rational Soul, that cannot dwell on Trifles, nor feed upon Impertinences, that abuſe our Time, and our Happineſs, and our Beings; and rob us of what we are, and what we were deſign'd for.

But this is not the Faſhion of your Converſations and Correſpondencies, that are all ſtrong and uſeful, maſculine and noble, worthy of a wiſe, and a Chriſtian Woman.

To

To the First, Concerning the Value of Birth; what it may claim, and what we are oblig'd to pay. I say, let it pretend to what it will, Vertue is infinitely above it, as far as Heaven is above Earth; exceeds it, as far as the Soul does the Body: That Vertue is great without it; but it without Vertue, is scandalous, and exposes; is a Load, and a Misery, and a sad Misfortune. Besides, that all its Pretences are on the Account of Vertue: That first rais'd an obscure Birth, and ennobled the Blood by a real Quality: And therefore, as soon as Vertue ceases in the Race, the Birth and the Blood return to their first Obscurity.

And this is your Title to Respect, without any other; nor need you any other.

As concerning Learning, its highest Quality is to be a Servant to Vertue; and when-ever it leaves the Service, 'tis wholly useless: And therefore its Value too wholly referrs to Vertue.

Concerning the Employment of our Time, Nothing is worthy of such an Expence, but what ministers to our Eternal Happiness. Let that employ us always, that will last always: Let the

the Hours burn in Prayer, and let the Night flame with Piety; and let our Days be as the Days of Heaven by inceſſant Praiſes and Adoration; let Vertue and Religion conſecrate every Moment of our Lives, and then ſhall this Life be very near a-kin to the next, and loſe its uſual Miſeries; and Death will make no great Change.

Whoever reflects on the infinite Uſe and Advantage that may be made of Time, will immediately turn Uſurer. Crowns, and Everlaſting Manſions, and the perpetual Glory, are the Intereſt of Time: Endleſs and unſpeakable Joys, that would rend our Mortal Frame, and ſhatter an Earthly Tabernacle, that can now enjoy but little, till refin'd, dilated, and enlarg'd in Heaven, and fitted to endure the Everlaſting Ecſtacy, and the Eternal Rapture, that ſhall ferment the Soul for ever with eternal and unutterable Joys, ſuch as the Heart of Man is not able now to conceive, without Danger to the whole Man.

On this Purchace we ſhould lay out all our Time, and not on that which is not Bread, but Ruin; that leads us from one Miſery to another,

from

from Death to Death, till it has at laſt plung'd us in Everlaſting Death, the conſtant Uſage, and never-failing Wages of unlawful Pleaſures, and Sin; that court and betray, that embrace and murther, that invite and kill.

Concerning Clothes, I ſay, A Degree of Decency in them is lawful, proportionable to our Rank and Condition. And they that live in Kings Houſes may wear ſoft Clothing, without the Imputation of Vanity or Pride.

In all Things uſe a Freedom of Spirit; neither draw your ſelf in too cloſe, nor burſt out; neither be ſcrupulous, nor licentious; both pay Tythe of Mint, and obſerve the weightier Duties of the Law.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER VIII.

SIR,

YOurs came late to me, but alway comes welcome, because it treat of that which deserves to be read and becomes the Holiness of our Ba ptism, and the Importance of our Cre tions; which must either be infinite ly happy, or infinitely miserable; an will allow no Time for Trifling in thi short Life, which is but just enough t fit us for Eternity.

So may you always write, and may we always read, and be still earnest with our selves, and with o another; still minding our great Bu siness, still travelling on, and keepin our Road; turning neither to th Right Hand, nor to the Left; becau the Danger of Straggling is infinite and the Day is far spent upon u all; and if benighted on the Roa we are lost for ever; and the Sun wi rise upon us no more to light our Fo lies, but will draw an Eternal Nigh over us.

What you have writ last, and often is useful and advantageous to this pur pose

poſe: Not ſhall I alone reap the Bene-fit of it.

The Glories and the Beauties you beſtow on Vertue, the charming Lights and Shades with which you paint it, and the Strengths with which you aſſault Vice, and repreſs its Confidences, and refute its Pretences, are a Service to all that read you, and may profit them greatly on the Road of Life, to direct the Way, and ſecure from Danger, and ſupport the Toil, and are beyond all the Impertinencies and Extravagances of Wit, that Waſte of Parts that makes us Ten Times more the Children of Folly than we were before: That Wit that has been ſo much the Darling of this wild, ſickly Age, and has almoſt ſtripp'd us of common Senſe, and murther'd true Wiſdom, the Governor of our Lives and Actions; referring a Heap of wretched Words and Talk, to all the Wiſdom and Conduct in the World.

This is their Folly: But you are far from praiſing their Saying.

The juſt Reſentment, the holy Zeal, the ſacred Rage that fills your laſt to me, and ſhines upon all your Converſations, ſhew how much you eſpouſe the Intereſts of Vertue, and the Glories of Religion, which have

been so much assaulted and oppos
by this foolish Generation, that
still studying and contriving its own
Shame and Ruine; preferring the Infa-
my, and all the Miseries of Vice, to that
Glory, Honour, Immortality, and E-
ternal Life, that attends on Vertue.
This is a Wickedness that is far
removed from you; and much yo
have done to remove it from other
But the Current runs strong against
you; and 'tis a noble Vertue, not t
be carried with it. And your Labour
have this Comfort, that it is happie
to escape alone, than to perish in Com
pany.

Me you have greatly obliged; an
so you will, as often as you write t
him who is,

Sir, &c.

LET

LETTER IX.

MADAM,

THough you have honoured me with a Correſpondence, and take ſome ſatisfaction in writing to, and hearing from me, yet am I not any way worthy of it.

I know, all your Delight is in converſing with Vertue, and beholding its Beauties, and ſubmitting to its Charms, and gazing on its Features; and when you read mine, you are not angry, but forgive the Troubles you have almoſt commanded; and which you will own I would have excus'd, becauſe I know nothing can come from me, that has any Dignity or Worth beyond the Subject: And ſhould I imagine otherwiſe, I ſhould greatly wrong my ſelf, and the Truth.

That you are very humble, is but ſad Reaſon that I ſhould be very vain, and Imagine that I can entertain her who has made ſo great an advance in Vertue, and taſted ſo largely of its Joys, that nothing I find you can tell you more than you know.

But whatever treats of Vertue is acceptable to you, and you love to converſe with it in any Dreſs, becauſe it charms in any. And this is the Reaſon I have conſented to write to you, and to obey you, and to expoſe my ſelf.

And happy is ſhe who has built her Happineſs on ſuch a Foundation, that nothing can injure or diſturb it: The Bottom defies the Floods, and the Top is higher than the Winds, and Death it ſelf ſhall help to build it higher.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER X.

MADAM,

ACcept the thankful Return, your laſt to me deſerves, of which I was wholly unworthy; but you oppreſs with Goodneſs, and make it difficult to be grateful. I would willingly make ſome Return ſuitable to the Favours I have receiv'd from you; which are many, and great, and undeſerved; but you have ſet it paſt my power:

power; and I am more likely to increaſe, than diſcharge the Debt.

But if ought I write delights you, if Vertue has not charm'd the leſs for reading mine; if it has warm'd your holy Breaſt, and kindled ſacred Fire there; if the flaming Soul was ſoaring then with Silver Wings to Heaven; if the Guardian-Beauty then inſpires ſacred Zeal and Love, and breaths the Joys of Heaven; if your Wiſdom is not leſs, and if your Happineſs be more; if Hymns and Prayer conſecrate the Night, and pious Works the Day; if you weep more, if you faſt oftner, if you retire longer; then I may modeſtly hope I have diſcharg'd a part of ſo large a Debt, and that you your ſelf will diſcharge the reſt, and always believe none to be more,

Madam, Your, &c.

LETTER XI.

SIR,

I Would not have you take it ill, that I have not ſeen you for ſome Time: for it was not Want of Love, but becauſe all Worldly Affections and Relations are of little Moment, compar'd to Spiritual Relations and Friendſhips. I ſhall much rather chuſe to expreſs the latter, than the former, towards you, who are now juſt entring into a World that is crowded with Spiritual Enemies, and Dangers, and Ruins; that will endeavour to defeat your beſt Happineſs in this World, which is that of inward Joy, and Peace, and Hope; and your Eternal Happineſs in the next, that infinitely exceeds all that this World can propoſe to us, which has nothing truly great, or happy, or laſting in it; nothing inward, or ſincere; nothing that can out-laſt a ſhort and miſerable Life, or paſs one Step beyond the Grave, to comfort one Moment in the other World, where there is moſt need.

Therefore

Therefore the true and everlaſting Wiſdom of every Man, is, to know how to value and deſpiſe a-right; to know what will make him really, and certainly, and inwardly happy, and that for ever; and what it is that only pretends to it, and, upon Trial, can perform no ſuch Matter: Such as are Riches, and Pleaſures, and Honours: And accordingly, to purſue and follow, to avoid and ſlight. And much it imports us to have this Knowledge early, before we have travell'd far on a wrong Road, and have a great Way to go back; that we may ſet out right, and keep our Way, which lies high above this World, and leads through Joys, to Joys; through the Pleaſures of Vertue in this Life, to Everlaſting Joys in the Life to come. And that Road is Piety and Vertue; a vaſt and juſt Contempt of the Things of this Life, that can do nothing towards our real Happineſs, but much towards our real and eternal Miſery: A flaming Senſe of the Intereſts of Vertue and Religion, that will ſecure us through a dangerous and a miſerable World, and carry us to the only Rational Object of our Labours and Deſires.

This Wisdom, and this Happines I sincerely and heartily wish you. And I can wish him nothing greater, or better, who is half my own Flesh and Blood, because it can make you happy in any Condition.

Thus he who is the greatest of Sinners, has presum'd to write to you. But let not that hinder you from using the Advices he has sent you, which are able to set and keep you in the true Road to Happiness in this World, and in the World to come.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XII.

SIR,

FOrgive this, though it comes to you late, because you have no Reason to question my Readiness to serve you in whatsoever I am able. Of this I have given you large Proof already, and you your self have often own'd it, and that not without Reason.

I know

I know how little you value a trifling Correſpondence, and how much you preferr Silence to Impertinence; and that your ſtrong and holy Soul is not to be fed with Traſh, but loves to dwell upon that which is ſolid, and becoming your holy Education, and your own natural Inclinations to that which is wiſeſt and beſt, and a Life worthy of the Chriſtian Religion, and the immortal Hope.

And thus only would I chuſe to correſpond with you, that I may be the better for Writing, and you not the worſe for Reading; that neither of us may trifle with our Time, or abuſe that which is of the greateſt value.

There is ſomething particular in your Temper, and Manner of Life, that makes it pleaſant and delightful to me to write to you; And your near Alliance to Vertue, your ſtricter Life, the Severity of your Manners, the Holineſs of your Devotions, the Sincerity of your Friendſhip, your Readineſs to oblige, your Knowledge, Parts, and Modeſty, endear you to all who know you, and bind them faſt to you; and none more than him who writes to you now, who has known

known you through all the various Improvements of your Vertue, and happy Changes of your Life; ſtill admiring the happy Succeſs, through your own Labours, and the Bleſſings of God; that having now maſter'd every Difficulty, and triumph'd over the Obſtinacy of every Vice, and the Inveteracy of ill Habits, you are grown a fair and a large Example. And it is a Lecture to ſee you, and to converſe with you; to admire and imitate you. Nor are you backward to communicate with a charming Sweetneſs, the beſt Rules and happieſt Methods to attain to Wiſdom and Happineſs; after which you have labour'd ſo much, and not in vain.

How abundantly are you now recompenc'd for all the Pains you have taken in the rough Path of Vertue! Careſs'd by inward Joys, fill'd with Peace, even to Tranſport, indifferent to all the Changes of Fortune; neither the richer for Riches, nor the poorer for Poverty; neither increas'd by Honours, nor leſſen'd by Contempt. If the World is in Arms, and dy'd in Chriſtian-Blood, your Peace is as the River, and no Man taketh it from you; though I could wiſh you

you convers'd more with the World, that the World might be the better for converſing with you. This, I know, is much againſt your Inclinations, who preferr the Quiet and Security of the Port, to all the Bravery of Riding it out in the Storm: But the latter is certainly a larger Vertue, and a better Service to the World, and a nobler Religion.

This was the Life of God, and of his Apoſtles; of the Patriarchs, and the Prophets; of holy Kings and Biſhops, the Guardians of the Temporal and Spiritual Happineſs of the World; and of them who turn many to Righteouſneſs, and are themſelves to ſhine as the Stars, for ever and ever. 'Tis true, their Labours and Contentions are great, and their Martyrdom is living and tedious, unreliev'd by Death and a quick Hand, juſtly envying the *Fœlici cruore damnatos:* But the Triumph and the Crown is proportionable to all their Labour, and their Reward ſhall live through all the Ages of Eternity, and they ſhall be as happy as they can endure for ever.

Come forth! Appear then in the Beauty of Vertue, fitted and prepared by Retirement for publick Labours,

bours, and for a publick Example. Quit the Port, and launch out into the Storm, and let the raging Tempest own you strong in the Rescue of your Brethren from a common Danger: Let your Vertue shine like Lightning in the Storm: Act your own Glory, and the common Deliverance from the Tyranny of Vice: Nor let your Retirement any longer wrong the Publick. This is my earnest Desire, and the earnest Desire of all that know you; and who hope you will preferr a publick Good to a private Happiness, and the common Service to a single Ease.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XIII.

SIR,

THis is the Third Letter you receive from me ſince I heard from you, but your own Concerns require this, and therefore you have the more Reaſon to forgive it, though it informs you of the Loſs of that large Debt you reckon'd ſure, and that you are to depend upon it no longer: Nor is this the only Inſtance in which you are a Worldly Lover; ſhe whom you ſo much lov'd, ſhe who was to you as your own Soul, and whoſe Love for you exceeded the Love of Women; whoſe Love for you was wonderful, is now no more; from you and Nature ſhe is remov'd for ever; the Mind which ſo much charm'd you, now ſojourns naked in another World, ſtripp'd of that Body which was the Pride of Nature, and gave her Queen of all her Sex. No more ſhall you behold that charming Face, that ſtruck your Soul when firſt you ſaw it, and challeng'd Friendſhip's utmoſt Vows; no more thoſe Eyes which kindled warm and ſacred Love, ſudden and long; no more ſhall they behold the Sun or you:

you: *Almira*, faireſt of humane things, is now no more; ſhe whom every Vertue grac'd; ſhe who was chaſt and kind as Angels, devout as ancient *Syrian* Hermits, and holy as the great *Aſcetick's* ſacred Siſter, or the *Egyptian Mary*, inhabits now another World; is loſt in Crowds of Angels, diſſolv'd in everlaſting Joys, to be ſeen no more by humane Eyes; no more ſhall write the beſt and kindeſt things to you, nor you the ſofteſt ſacred things to her; your Tenderer half is dead and buried, and you knew it not till now; but ſeek not to appeaſe your Grief with Tears, for that would weep you blind, and you would weep in vain, but let Prayer ſtanch the mighty Sorrow, and Reſignation heal your Grief, think not of *Almira's* Death, but of her Life, and do you live it over again, and thus reſtore your other half to Life; think how ſhe talk'd, and how ſhe writ, and how ſhe liv'd; think of that chaſt and beauteous Face that charm'd againſt *Almira's* Will, in ſpight of Faſts, and penitential Tears, and nightly Watches; in Spite of all that ſhe could do or ſuffer; that ſacred Face, whoſe Picture always hangs before your Thoughts; think of that angelick Air, and ſacred Mien that aw'd

who-

whoever it charm'd, and charm'd whoever it aw'd; think how in the midſt of a plentiful Fortune, her own Hands miniſtred to her Neceſſities; how modeſt her Apparel, how humble her Behaviour, how laviſh to the poor, how ſparing to her ſelf, and with theſe Remembrances appeaſe your Sorrow, ſay to your ſelf, ſhe is ſtill alive, and more alive than ever, in a better Place, and better Company; and then admire you ſhould grieve ſo much, becauſe ſhe is ſo happy whom you lov'd ſo much, and now enjoys what you have ſo often wiſh'd her; and ſay theſe Tears recall thoſe Wiſhes, and I muſt weep no more. Say if *Almira* is thus happy, how ſhould I rejoice; and ſhare her Happineſs, who ſhar'd it while ſhe liv'd below? And thus ſhall her paſt Life comfort you, and her preſent Glory tranſport you, that were it in your Power, you would not call her back again, or bring her down to this miſerable Life. And thus you may manage your ſelf on the Death of all your other Friends, and of your neareſt Relations, who tread the Paths of Vertue, and give juſt Hopes that they ſhall be happy as we can wiſh them; and that you can pretend no other Reaſon for your

Weep-

Weeping when they die, but that you love their Company better than their Happineſs, and that all this while you weep for your ſelf, and not for them, becauſe not they, but you, are miſerable.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XIV.

SIR,

YOur laſt was no mean Entertainment to me, for which I return you Thanks, deſiring to hear often from you, becauſe I know the Correſpondence will be to my Advantage.

You are pleaſed with an exceeding Humility, to deſire me to write to you concerning humane Miſeries and Afflictions, how they profit the Soul, and what Advantage we reap from them, how they improve our Vertue, and make us happier as well as better, to which I ſhall anſwer as God ſhall enable me.

I ſay, Firſt, in the Authority of the Scriptures, that they are favours peculiar to the Righteous, for the Wicked come into no Misfortue, neither are they

they plagued like other Men, and this is the Reaſon they are ſo wicked; but many are the Miſeries of the Righteous. And whom the Lord loves he corrects, and who ſhall doubt but that's for his good, which is ſent him from his infinite Friend, let it look how it will?

I ſay, Secondly, in the Authority of Experience, that every good Man finds the Benefit of them; I do not ſay they are pleaſant while they are upon us, while they are working and crucifying our very Souls, while our Bodies ſweat Blood, and our Souls are ſorrowful even unto Death, during the great Deſolation and Amazement, while we are a grinding and racking, while we are pouring forth our Souls unto Death, but our Peace may remain with us all this while; and the Favour of God, though not the Light of his Countenance; and though he hides his Face for a While, yet he will not abſent himſelf for ever; and the Joy which comes in the Morning, will relieve the Heavineſs that endures but for a Night, and the Light Affliction which is but for a Moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.

Theſe

These Considerations may comfort us while we are in the very Furnace, and enable us at the same Time that we cry, *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass*, to add, *Nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done.* To say, Father, thou art infinitely good, and while by thy Grace I endeavour to please thee, thou wilt lay nothing on me but what is for my good; though this Temptation is violent, and though the Battle is fought in Garments rolled in Blood, and I am press'd above Measure, so that I despair of Life; yet he who has led me into this Temptation, will deliver me out of it, and when I have pass'd through Fire and Water, he will bring me forth into a wealthy Land. He will crown me for ever, for all the Wounds I have received, and for all the Blood I have lost, and give me Beauty for Dust, and Garments of Praise for those that were rolled in Blood. He who led me to the Battle, will lead me to the Triumph, he who saw me struck down to the Ground in his Cause, will raise me up to Heaven; if I sow in Tears, I shall reap in Joy, and with these Cordials we may recover and support our fainting Spirits.

But

But if we are capable of all this Comfort while the Miſery rages, and we in the midſt of the Furnace, and while we are torn with Agonies and Convulſions, how large ſhall our Peace be when the Storm is laid, and the Tempeſt ſleeps, and all is calm as the Face of Heaven, or the Viſage of a Cherubim deſcending with Meſſages of Love and Peace on Earth; when the Conſolation abounds, and the beauteous Guardian renews his Viſits, ſtreaming pureſt Joys into the Soul, with balmy Comforts healing all its ſorrows, and compoſing every Grief, that the Bones which had been broken might rejoice; and the Anthem will be, "Thou art "my Father, my God, and my ſtrong "Salvation; thou haſt ſent down "from on high to deliver me, thy right "Hand has ſav'd me, thou haſt mighti"ly delivered thy Servant, the Wa"ters ſaw thee, O God, the Waters "ſaw thee, and were afraid, the Depths "alſo were troubled, thy Lightnings "ſhone, and thy Arrows went abroad "in my Defence. This Song we ſhall take up, and whatever elſe is ſolemn and triumphant in the *Pſalms* of *David*, and our Soul ſhall be ſatisfied even as it were with Marrow and Fatneſs, while we are praiſing God with

joyful

joyful Lips, " My Heart is fixed O " God, my Heart is fixed, I will sing " and give Praise, awake my Glory, " and awake my Lute, and awake my " Harp, and I my self will awake " right early; for the Greatness of " thy Mercy reaches unto the Heavens, and thy Truth unto the Clouds, " set up thy self, O God, above the " Heavens, and thy Glory above all " the Earth. Thus shall we break forth into Songs of Triumph, and Anthems of Deliverance; and if Tribulation have abounded, Consolations shall abound much more in Psalms and Inspired Poetry, and inspired Hymns.

And thus far have I writ to you in the Genius of the Scriptures, because they are infinitely stronger and holier than any humane Reasoning or Discourse, for they are the Discourse of a God, and not of a Man, and are the Measure of the Truth and Holiness of all other Discourses; but humane Discourses withal, have their Weight and Dignity, and Effect, may comfort and support, and even raise the Soul up to a holy Triumph, tho writ by Heathens themselves; such are those of *Plutarch* and *Seneca*, to which a Christian may be beholden for Comforts, and even have a better Opinion

of

of Miſeries, this Dignity and Power I ſay there is in the very natural Reaſon. Therefore we may not deſpiſe it, or ſlight its Uſe and Helps, and Advantages; nor was it given us to be ſo us'd, but to treat it with Reſpect, and to make the moſt of it: It too will tell us, that Afflictions are nearly related to Vertue, and Pleaſures to Vice, that Pleaſures naturally let the Mind down, and that Afflictions raiſe it, that Difficulties and Hardſhips are the proper Objects of Vertue, as Sloth and eaſie Joys, of Vice; and theſe are Notions of no ſmall Dignity and Importance, to be inform'd how Sufferings purge, and cleanſe, and purifie the Mind, looſen it from the Body, make it ſtrong and healthy, ſpiritual and noble, ambitious and heavenly, while Luxury and Proſperity make it ſoft and mean, fearful and poor, unapable of the vaſt Labours and Rewards of Vertue; that all Pleaſures but thoſe of the Mind, are baſe and ſenſual, and ſully the Body as well as the Soul, and tarniſh our very Thoughts: And to come cloſe to the Purpoſe, that thoſe only are true pleaſures, that are ſqueez'd out of Miſeries and Sufferings, and proceed from Patience and Fortitude, and a hardy Vertue.

true. To ſcorn and hate Pleaſures, i
a true and noble Pleaſure, *hæc ſumm*
voluptas, odiſſe & contempſiſſe voluptat
dilectari miſeriis; and in all this ther
is not one Word of Stoiciſm, but intire
agrees with St. *Paul*'s Words, —*There*
fore I take Pleaſure in Infirmities, a
Neceſſities, and Diſtreſſes, and God fo
bid, that I ſhould glory, ſave in t
Croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; ſo tha
by the Authority of the Scriptures,
Man may glory and rejoice in Miſer
and that for this natural Reaſon, th
if Tribulations abound, then do Co
ſolations abound much more; and
that Strength has this Reaſon be
and of that real Force, that many
the Martyrs in the bittereſt Torment
have rejoic'd, not accepting Deliv
rance, as the ſame Scriptures infor
us; and that without the leaſt Stup
dity or playing the Fool with the
Reaſon or their Senſes, but in th
juſt and utmoſt Uſe of them both
have preferr'd the preſent Joy an
Hope, and to us unconceivable Sup
port, to a Deliverance from any pa
they could ſuffer; which in many we
loſt and drown'd in the greatneſs
their Joys: No, let Stupidity be la
to the Sons and Daughters of Pleaſure
and Honour, and Intereſt, to the Hero
an

nd the Miſer, and the Debauché; who will ſuffer infinitely for nothing. The irſt will exhauſt all the Labours of War, will paſs through Water, and Blood, and ire, to be praiſed; and embrace a Sha-low, to make Men talk who have ſome-hing elſe to do: This is their Folly; nd their Generation praiſe their Saying. he Labours of the Covetous are not eſs: They will renounce all the Plea-ures of this Life, and of the Life to ome, for the ſake of that, which when btain'd, they will not enjoy: They will watch, and fear, and ſtarve for that hich, when they have got, they will ot touch: They will live in the utmoſt overty and Shame, for the poor Rea-on of dying rich. And the Debauche will rot, becauſe he loves his Body; and e is for thoſe Pleaſures that can make im roar; and he will renounce his Rea-on, that he may be a Wit. Theſe are ollies of a ſtrange Size and Shape, and omething thicker than Stupidity it ſelf. Thus have I written to you more large-y than uſual; and if it gives you any atisfaction, I am happy.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XV.

MADAM,

AS I have long delay'd this, so I like you had not heard from me yet, if common Civility had not obliged me, though a longer Silence had been a greater.

Had your laſt to me treated me with that Contempt I deſerve, and done me the Juſtice I might challenge, my Return to yours had been ſpeedier: But what you have writ, is loſt on me, who have no Right to it, nor any way deſerve the Honour of correſponding with you. You are a large Entertainment to your ſelf; and you would be a Company in a Wilderneſs. Your own Thoughts are large Converſations, your Piety treats you, Retirement careſſes you, Vertue feaſts you, your Hopes tranſport you. Nor are thoſe very Mortifications (with which you ſo ſeverely treat that beauteous Frame) without their Joys: If you talk, you make the Company; if you read, your Converſation is with the greater Dread. Thus happy, How can I add to your Happineſs? But I may eaſily interrupt it; Which is a ſtrange Civility; and ſuch an

one as I would rather refuſe than pay, you would give me leave.

What can divert you more than your ppy Contemplations, that raiſe the umane Life above the World, and r the Soul to Heaven in a ſecret Peace, d pureſt Joys, which your own Heart ows, and a Stranger intermeddles not ith; than thoſe Devotions, that in- me your Soul, and kindle brighteſt res, and exhale it quite to Heaven; an thoſe pious Offices you perform publick, miniſtring to the Neceſſi- of the Orphan, bleſſing the Wi- w, covering the Naked, and refreſh- the Bowels of the Diſtreſſed: La- urs you are forc'd to perform in pub- k, while you wiſh they were un- own.

And how can I add to ſo much ppineſs? And what can I do, that make you happier? This is the fineſs of your own Angel, who has t miniſtred to you in vain, nor yet es miniſter: He will be about your d, and about your Path, and ob- ve all your Ways; allure you with ys, and warn you with Fears, and ive with you againſt the Tempta- on, and againſt the Tempter, and form you of all his Strength, and ſcover all his Wiles, and make you

wiſe to Salvation, and inſtruct yo
in an holy Prudence, and ſpiritu
Arts, and tell you of the Danger
living too faſt, and being over-rig
teous, and how the Enemy will ma
his Advantages of it; who, when
cannot perſuade you to lie down
the Way, will put you upon Ru
ning your ſelf out of Breath; whi
he knows come both to the ſa
Thing, and will equally ſerve his Tu
And in this, above all other Matt
it is neceſſary that you be throug
ly inſtructed; or he will come rou
you, and every Step you make w
be a Fall, and every Fall will bru
you ſorely. When he ſees he cann
hinder you from faſting, he will pr
tend to promote it, and put you u
on exceſſive Faſts, to dry up yo
Devotions, and the Goodneſs of yo
Temper, and ſowre your Love, a
fret your Peace, and enrage your P
tience; that what you gain one Wa
you may loſe ten-fold another; th
inſtead of keeping under the Bod
and purifying the Mind, and ſoberi
the Deſires, the Paſſions may take
ſtronger Ferment, and the Body b
diſabled from ſerving the Mind, an
the Mind ſtripp'd of all its Vigou
and both lie fainting on the Wa

f you are inclin'd to Prayer, and e finds he cannot hinder you, then e immediately ſhifts Hands, and en-eavours to perſuade you, that your rayers are neither warm enough, nor any enough, nor long enough; that e may tire you, and waſte your Spi-its, and that you may take a Sur-eit of Prayer; that when you have ſtabled your ſelf for ſome Time, and aid by your Armour, he may ſet pon you naked with all his Strength nd Fury, and tear you in pieces while here is none to help, and while you eak to none. The Time would fail e to tell you how many Ways he ndeavours to abuſe us; but by none more than by ſpiritual Indiſcretion.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER XVI.

SIR,

IF you forgive my Delay in answering your laſt, you will oblige me; and if you reap any Benefit by mine it will be a Satisfaction to me. For while we do good to others, we befriend our ſelves, and are ſtill promoting our own Intereſt, which God has placed in that of others, and promoting the Good of our Neighbour whom we are to love as our ſelves; and our Reward ſhall be with the Moſt High, and Crowns and Palms ſhall grow out of the Labours of our Charity, and Everlaſting Reſt ſhall bleſs our Love.

But whether my Letters to you be a Charity or a Trouble, a good or an impertinent Office, you will beſt be able to judge by the Effects: If they lead you to Wiſdom, they are Friends and Benefactors: If they promote your Happineſs, you will have Reaſon to forgive the Trouble of them, and not repent your deſiring to be thus troubled; for there is no Advantage equal to that of the Soul, which ſhall out-live the Age of Time, and behold

the

the Funeral of the World, and the Birth of the New Heavens, and the Second Eternity; for all its Advantages are eternal; and whatever it gains here, it shall enjoy for ever in the Region of Angels, in the Mansions of Ecstacy and Souls, of Cherubims and Spirits, of Rapture and Light; where the Reward shall grow to an infinite heighth, and the Joy shall stream like the Sun, and flame like Light. Hither I would serve you, and all who travel on the Road to Heaven, by inflaming your Hopes, and chasing your Love, and altering your Desires, and confirming your Faith, and endeavouring to raise you above Life, and above the World; from Impertinence and Sorrow, to Wisdom and Glory.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XVII.

MADAM,

YOur laſt ſtill dwells on the ſame Subject, on the ſame immortal and inexhauſtible Subject; the Glory of this Life, and the next; the beſt Wiſdom, and the higheſt Intereſt; our Race, and our Crown.

On that Subject I anſwer, that nothing can better employ your Soul, aſpiring to the Glories of the Upper Life, whither you contend; taking the Wings of the Morning, and born up upon the Flames of Prayer, and ſupported by your Duty; and the Angels that have the Charge of you, and bear you in their Hands, and raiſe you on their Purple Wings, ſoaring to the Palaces of Light and Bliſs, where the Joy is never quench'd, and where the Beauty and the Ecſtacy never dies; but ſhall infold you in the Arms of an Everlaſting Love, while your Soul is bath'd in unutterable and everlaſting Joys, that flow from the Face of God; *at whoſe Right Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore, ſuch as no Eye*

hath

has ſeen, or Ear heard, neither has it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive. Hither inceſſant Prayer will lead you, and cleanſing Faſts and Watchings; after which, you waſh your Face, and anoint your Head, that none may ſee, but he that ſees in ſecret, and rewards openly. Hither Holineſs and Vertue will conduct you, and ſteer you ſafe through this Stormy Nether World, and land you on the Immortal Shoar, and bring you to the Haven where you would be.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

SIR,

YOurs which inſiſted ſo much on the Pleaſures of Travelling, is more diverting than Inſtructive: Its Pleaſures I eaſilier allow, than its Advantages; though it is not without its many Troubles and Hazards, that prove him wiſer that ſtays at home.

The Eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor will the Fancy ever own

it has enough; but he shall have enough to do, and enough to suffer, that undertakes to humour it in all its various and unaccountable Changes: And he who travels till he accomplishes this, will not find Room enough in one World, nor in the Range of a Thousand.

I know no other wise Travelling, but that that brings us nearer to God; *Ad Deum autem non peregrinando, sed amando pervenitur.* And that we may do in the Land of our Nativity; yea, in our Father's House, and in the House in which we were born; without any Necessity of staring in Foreign Countries, or cutting the Face of the Sea, or going to and fro on the Earth, and seeking new Climates, or conversing with strange Languages, and Customs, and Complexions, and beholding the various Faces of the Humane Nature.

He who loves God much, has travell'd much, and is far advanc'd on the Road to Heaven; and his Travels shall turn to an everlasting Account, and make him wise for ever, and happy to all Eternity.

He who travels on the Errand of God, bearing the Everlasting Gospel, like

like the Apoſtles, travels to the purpoſe, to the ſolid Advantage of himſelf, and of the World. But he who travels out of Curioſity, could he tire the Sun, and weary the Moon, and fetch the Compaſs of the Empirean Heaven, yet ſhould he be neither the wiſer, nor the better; but have toiled infinitely, and have exhauſted endleſs Labours, and Expences, and Dangers, for that which is not Bread, not Wiſdom, nor Heaven.

But the Travels of Wiſdom may be perform'd at home, in the Improvements of the Mind, in vaſt Advances in Vertue, in a large Progreſs in Piety, in the Labours of Love, in ſubduing Temptations, and the Confidence and Impertinence of Fancy; in paſſing from Grace to Grace, and from Vertue to Vertue; from the Conqueſt of the Body, to the Enlarging of the Mind; from Anger to Patience, from Patience to Health, from Health to Beauty, from Beauty to Glory, from Earth to Heaven.

I am, Sir, &c.

LET-

LETTER XIX.

MADAM,

I Shall now, in Answer to yours, insist on the Heaven of Divine Love. And, forgive my Delay. You know it is not Neglect, but a better Cause has occasion'd it. Nor are you ignorant of my Readiness to serve you in the Interests of Eternity; how much I love your Soul should be in health, and you wise and happy for ever.

I say then, that Divine Love is the greatest Duty, and the greatest Reward of a Religious Life; that it is the utmost Happiness the Soul is capable of. That it is the Bread of Angels: That which refines the Body, and perfects the Mind; that subdues the World, and unites the Soul to God. And let this be the great End of your Religion, to arrive at the Perfection of Divine Love; than which, nothing better is known to Men or Angels. That now raises us up to Heaven, now draws down Heaven to us; and is every Beauty, and every Perfection, and every Glory; its own Duty,

and

and its own Reward; a Heaven drawn over this Life; the great Intercourſe betwixt the Upper and the Nether World; that attracts the Angels, and chaſes the Evil Spirits; that tramples on the World, and on the Conquerors and the Tyrants of the World. 'Tis greater than Empire, and fairer than Beauty; and richer than the Treaſures of Kings, or the Bowels of the Earth. 'Tis the Standard of every Pretence to Religion: That that wants it, is none; that that has it, is perfect. In its Strength you ſhall go farther in a Day, than without it in an Age. By it the Martyrs died, and the glorious Confeſſors out-liv'd their many Deaths; and ſpent and wreck'd the Storm, inſtead of being wreck'd; and return'd late, but loaded with Glories, to Heaven. On it you ſhall ſecure your Soul for ever; for it is not alone, but in its Train follows every Vertue, and every Grace; and (but long behind, in the Rank of Slaves) follow all the Paſſions in Chains; Unreaſonable Wickedneſs, Polluting Luſts, and Dark Revenge; the Intemperances of the Mind, and the Exceſſes of the Body; Fear and Deſire, Malice and Covetouſneſs; Pride, and Cowardice, Sloth, and all that is wicked, and bold,

bold, and little; impudent, or mischievous, or impertinent; a Friend to Vice, or an Enemy to Wisdom and Happiness. All these confess its Power, and follow its Triumph, and bow the Head to its Glory. Great is Faith, great is Hope, and great are the Things they have perform'd: But greater than these, and every Thing else, is Love; for God is Love. And there is nothing which is so much the Terrour of Evil Spirits, as Divine Love; nor Watchings, nor Prayer, nor Fasts, nor Charities, nor Mercy, nor Humility, nor Patience, nor any other Vertue, acts so perfect a Triumph over them; as one by Experience hath assured us.

I am, Madam, &c.

LET-

LETTER XX.

SIR,

THE Subject of your last is weighty, and if you desire my Judgment on it, it is this, that let our Duty be never so difficult, we must set our Shoulder to it, and not take up part and let the rest lie, and cry our Strength is not proportionable to the Weight of the whole. This the everlasting Fire, this the everlasting Glory will not permit, unless we will forfeit the one, and for ever lie down in the other, for the Sake of being easie and lazy for a few Years; but who would purchase such a scandalous Happiness at the Price of a flaming and enraged Eternity? To burn for his Ease, and to be miserable for ever to save himself a Trouble, to howl out eternal Ages that he may be quiet for a Moment; may so much Folly never oppress you, and may this Choice never be made by you; judge of your Duty now as you would if you were weltring in the Flames of Hell; and see if there be any Comparison betwixt the Miseries of the one and of the other, who in that Place of Torments would

would not forgive an Injury, or an Affront, or quit a Luſt, or a Revenge to be diſcharg'd? And will it not be wiſer done before we come there, for not doing it here? And there are few better Means to prevent our really coming there hereafter, than to fanſie our ſelves there now, and to conſider what it is we would not do to get loose from ſuch a Condition, and immediately to reſolve to do as much now, to prevent our ever coming there; let the Gate of Heaven be never ſo narrow, and the way to it never ſo ſtrait; yet ſurely it is eaſier to preſs through, than to lie down in everlaſting Burnings for the Pleaſure of a *facilis deſcenſus*.

But ſhall the Joys of Heaven weigh nothing with us in this Matter? Shall not they too provoke to do and ſuffer to the utmoſt that we may attain to them; if the Difficulties of our Duty be never ſo great, yet if the Reward be infinitely greater, greater Reaſon have we to rejoice than complain, unleſs we think no Reward great enough for ſleeping ſoundly, or doing nothing, or doing very wickedly, and exceeding fooliſhly, if Poverty and the Stone, the Gout and Contempt, and all the Miſeries that Advice or Phyſick knows,

if all the Afflictions which the Righteous have known, and the Wicked escap'd, who are not plagu'd like other Men, ſhould crawl upon every Moment of our Lives; and Life were nothing but Racks and Agonies, and Martyrdom, yet were it worth the While to ſuffer all, for the Sake of Heaven, and for his Sake who ſuffer'd ſo much for us and for our Salvation to bring us to his Glory.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XXI.

MADAM,

I Have nothing to ſay in Excuſe for my Delay in anſwering your laſt, your Sex and your Birth, your Vertue and Piety, and the common Reſpect you receive from all, obliged me to a quicker Compliance with your Deſires, which are always reaſonable and juſt, uſeful and unimpertinent, the Satisfaction of him who ſerves you, as well as of her who is ſerv'd; whoſe Beauties are ſacred, and charm to Vertue, not to Luſt, and

you

you are ſeen like Angels, with Admiration, not Deſire.

And now with what can I entertain you better, than with thoſe Subjects that ſtill delight your Holy Mind, and furniſh you with the pureſt Joys, and often bath your Soul in Heaven, and raiſe you high above all this lower World; above Intereſts and Pleaſures, above Deſires and Fears, above Life and Death, that have rear'd your Vertue to ſuch an admir'd Heighth, when you talk you inſtruct, when you are ſilent you admoniſh, and all your Behaviour is either a Lecture, or an Example, or a mild Reproof, that invites the good, and corrects the bad, and cheriſhes and ſupports the Intereſts of Vertue, and repreſſes the Confidence of Vice, and the Impudence of Sin.

Such is ſhe whom we all reſpect! Such is ſhe whom we all admire! Nor are you obliged to bluſh when you read no more than what you are, the Joy of Vertue, and the Support of Manners, the Strength and Beauty of your Sex, and whom Men admire, the beſt Stay and the laſt Hopes of a decay'd and blaſted Age; that has been juſt to Religion in nothing, but in celebrating her Funerals, though with a falſe

falſe Piety conveying her out of the World.

The Satisfactions you take in Vertue are certainly wiſe and juſt; for nothing elſe can comfort or ſupport, nothing elſe can atone the Calamities of this miſerable Life, which we our ſelves have made ſo; by the Malice of our Sins, and by our innumerable Follies, with which we have oppreſs'd our Beings, and fill'd our Souls with Anguiſh, and turn'd Life into Death, and Death into Horrors.

May you ſtill more and more reſemble the Beauties of him you have never ſeen, but miniſters to you in ſecret, and encamps about you wherever you make your abode, and follows you where-ever you go; may he ſtill delight to tarry round about you, and deliver you, when he whiſpers do you hearken and do, when he reſtrains ſecretly, do you refrain, that his Miniſtry be not in vain.

I am, Madam, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXII.

SIR,

AS a farther Answer to your last, which now a greater Leisure allows me to make, I tell you, that you cannot allow too much Time to Prayer, because it is your Life, and your Security; your Guard, and your Defence; the Shield and the Sword of the Soul, the Friend of Vertue, and the Rage of Satan: That repels the Evil Spirits, and invites the Good. Let its Warmths inflame you always, and its Powers fill your Soul: 'Tis the great Business of this Life, as Praise is of the next: 'Twill grapple for you in the Temptation, and strive with you in the Agony of Sin, and support you fainting in the Resistance: 'Twill obtain whatever you desire, and prevent whatever you fear: 'Twill cover you from the Terrours of the Night, and from the Arrow that flies by Day; from Sorrows and Folly, and from Repentance, by preventing the Occasion: 'Twill preserve the Glory of the Soul, and adorn it ever more and more, and prevent the Deformi-

ties

ties and Ruins of Sin, and the ſad Cry of *Why go I thus heavily, while the Enemy oppreſſes me?* 'Twill conquer for you, and triumph with you: 'Twill ſcatter the Enemy: 'Twill teach you how to go upon the Lion and the Adder: 'Twill ſolve the Deluſion, and diſperſe the Temptation, and purſue the Enemy, and tread them under that riſe up againſt you.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XXIII.

MADAM,

THat you deſire to hear from me, is, becauſe you abound in Modeſty, not that I am worthy to write to you, who am leſs than the leaſt of all Men, the weakeſt and the worſt of Men. But if you receive Benefit by my writing to you, 'twill in ſome meaſure compound for my Immodeſty in writing.

Your own Troubles, and the Troubles of your Family, I own, are ſufficient to overthrow a weak Religion, and a trifling Faith. For if they are

ſuch

such as yours describes them, they are not to be born by an ordinary Strength: And such always is our own Strength; or rather, our own Weakness. Therefore we must have Recourse to Prayer, the only powerful Remedy against all Evils; for that will strengthen the Weak, and support the Feeble, and double our Patience, and make us equal to any Load; drawing Succours from an Infinite Fountain, that can always overrule our Miseries, and even turn them to Happiness, the constant Issue of them, when they are receiv'd with the Right Hand, and we behave our selves under them as we ought; for then they presently lose their Weight, and their Bitterness; and of Enemies, become Friends and Allies; and strengthen our Vertues, and fight with us against our Follies and our Vices, that infest our Happiness, and corrupt our Wisdom; and make us firm and strong, and give Patience its perfect Work, making us perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

So that our Complaints of this kind must be low, modest, and temperate, lest we should be over-heard complaining of our best Friends, and such as render us the usefullest Offices,

fices, ſuch as will not flatter and deceive, weaken and diſ-ſpirit us; but harden us by ſevere and Manly Trials, and train us to Crowns and Everlaſting Rewards, to Glory, Honour, Immortality, and Eternal Life; which ſhall infinitely recompence for the ſhort Affliction, which is but for a Moment, and works for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Happineſs.

Or ſhall I ſend you his Advice, who had an extraordinary Unction in what he wrote; and who, in relation to your Caſe, writes thus:——

"There is no Security in this Life; "thou ſhalt always have need of Spi"ritual Armour. Thou liveſt amongſt "Enemies, and art aſſaulted on every "Hand. If therefore thou defendeſt "not thy ſelf with the Shield of Pa"tience, thou canſt not be long un"wounded. Moreover, If thou fix "not thy Heart on me, with a ſin"cere Will to ſuffer all Things for "me, thou canſt not bear the Heat "of this Battel, nor obtain the Tri"umphant Reward of the Saints in "Bliſs. Thou oughteſt therefore man"fully to go through all, and to uſe "a ſtrong Hand againſt whatſoever "doth withſtand thee. For, to him

"that

" that overcomes is *Manna* given; but
" for the Negligent there remains much
" Misery.

" If thou seekest Rest in this World,
" how wilt thou then attain to the
" Everlasting Rest? Dispose not thy-
" self to much Ease, but to much
" Patience. Seek true Peace; not in
" Earth, but in Heaven; not in Men,
" nor in any other Creature, but in
" God alone. Thou oughtest, for the
" Love of God, willingly to undergo
" all Things, Labours, Griefs, Tempta-
" tions, Vexations, Anxieties, Necessi-
" ties, Infirmities, Injuries, Detractions,
" Reprehensions, Humblings, Shame,
" Corrections, and Contempts. These
" help to Vertue; these try a No-
" vice of Christ; these make the Hea-
" venly Crown. I will give an Ever-
" lasting Reward, for a short La-
" bour; and Infinite Glory, for Tran-
" sitory Shame.

" Thinkest thou that thou shalt al-
" ways have Spiritual Consolations at
" Will? My Saints had not so; but
" they had many Afflictions, and sun-
" dry Temptations, and many Dis-
" comforts; in all which they did
" bear up patiently, and trusted ra-
" ther in God, than in themselves;
" knowing that the Sufferings of this

" Life

" Life are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which ſhall be revealed. Wilt thou have that immediately, and without Pains, which Multitudes, after many Tears, and great Labours, have hardly obtain'd? Wait upon the Lord, do manfully, be of good Courage, do not deſpair, do not flee; but with Conſtancy expoſe both Body and Soul for the Glory of God. I will reward thee in moſt plentiful manner, and will be with thee in all thy Tribulations.

I am, Madam, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

SIR,

IN Anſwer to yours, I ſay, there is no ſuch Thing as Outward Happineſs, any farther than Vertue gives the Reliſh. In this your Experience joyns with me, who have ſo often own'd you could never make any Thing of the World, without Religion, though your Share of it be not inconſiderable, and more than a truly wiſe Man would deſire, or you think is neceſſary.

And this is our great Happineſs, and the great Wiſdom, and Power, and Goodneſs of God, who has ſet our Happineſs higher than all this World, and plac'd it in the Joys of Vertue, and the Hopes of Heaven, in Sufferings and Labours, in Perſecutions and Contempts, in oppoſing the Rage and Malice of Folly, and the Inſolence of Wickedneſs, and the Fury of Cuſtom and Example; in a vaſt Patience, and a noble Courage; in a ſtrong and a ſincere Mind, that will neither abuſe itſelf, nor comply with an evil World. And though all this be very difficult and

and ſtartling at the firſt, yet the Advance, and Progreſs, and Iſſue, are Joy and Happineſs, Glory, Honour, Immortality, and Eternal Life.

And he who acts and ſuffers thus, has a nobler and a ſincerer Enjoyment, even of the Things of the World, than any falſe and proſtitute Villain or Coward, than any complying intemperate Glutton, than any of the Sons of Luſt, or the Baſtards of Pleaſure, that would be any Thing for an infamous Life.

For whatever has any Reliſh of Happineſs beſides, Vertue receives it from Vertue; And therefore, he who has moſt Vertue, has the greateſt Enjoyment of the Things of the World; His Mind is fitted and prepar'd for Happineſs, and tinctures every Thing with its own Peace and Joys.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XXV.

MADAM,

THat you return Thanks for my laſt to you, and acknowledge any Service it has done you, is not a doing Juſtice to me, but to your own Humility and Modeſty, while you chuſe to receive the Advice you are able to give.

But whatever Opinion you have of the Paper you receiv'd from me, it muſt not alter mine of my ſelf, who am nothing, and of my ſelf able to do nothing. If I write to you, it is not becauſe I am fit to write; but becauſe you command me to write, who know my Readineſs to obey you: But would rather in any Thing elſe, than in this.

I know your Soul is not to be entertain'd with Trifles: And what elſe can you expect from me, whoſe Weakneſs and Imperfections you diſcover in every Thing? And why will you employ me above my Strength? Or ſeek thoſe Advices from him, who, of all others, is moſt unfit to give them?

You

You desire the strongest Antidotes against Sorrow and Grief, and an extraordinary Concern upon any Worldly Account; but, with your wonted Humility, would raise them on the Account of your Sins; and would bestow Sorrow where Sorrow is due, while you would avoid the Sorrow that works Death, but cannot remove the Evil, nor persuade the Good.

You desire to be directed to those Joys that can fill the Mind, and satisfie the Soul, and quench the Greatness of its Thirst, and the Rage of its Desires. And the Task you lay on me is vast, and above my Weakness: And they are Services I have not been able to perform for my self: And what can I do in the Behalf of another? Can he relieve others, who has nothing for himself? Can he guard others, who is Defenceless himself? Can the Poor treat, and be at large Expences; And shall he who has no Power, undertake great Things, without exposing himself mightily? In this you are not equal, I will not say just: You have considered your own Relief, but forgot my Inability.

But you are willing, I find, to be pleased with any Compliance with your Commands, and to excuse any Imper-

fections, but those of the Will: And much I may employ this Temper of yours, and much there will be for you to forgive.

'Tis no easie Matter to remove a fullen and inveterate Grief, and an obstinate Sorrow, and the gloomy Trouble; especially when Nature joyns with the Occasion, and the Distemper is become a Habit, and we lie down in our Miseries; when we desire Help, and are loth to receive it: For that is sometimes the Case, though strange, and almost incredible, in which something there is of the great Power of Custom, but much more of the Mercy of God, over-ruling Humane Miseries, and changing their very Natures. But when such are told, that Worldly Sorrow works Death, there can be little Encouragement left to humour the Distemper, and to side with the great Enemy of Humane Nature and Happiness, and enter into a Confederacy against ourselves, and torment our selves to please our selves; for there is such a perverse Folly in the World, and Reason has been thus far blinded, and a Habit of Misery has gone thus far, assisted by a perverse Folly.

But, methinks, every one ought to have more Love for themſelves, and to be better Friends to their own Happineſs, and rather ſtrive to abate, than increaſe their Miſeries; for this is according to Reaſon, and Nature, and an indiſpenſible Debt, which all owe themſelves, and are bound to diſcharge.

And in order to it, nothing is more available, than to conſider the In-value of all Humane Things; how little our Happineſs or our Miſery really depends upon them, without our Conſent; that they can neither add to the one, or the other, without Leave from our Folly and Miſtake. And therefore, Why ſhould we rejoyce ſo much at their Coming, or grieve at their Departure, and expoſe our Happineſs on every trifling Occaſion, and our ſelves to a Thouſand needleſs Miſeries, and impertinent Afflictions, for want of fixing a right Judgment of Things, and a right Notion of our ſelves? He who has ſaid to Vertue, *Thou art my Portion for ever, and my Happineſs*, ſhall not eaſily be mov'd; and his Goings ſhall not ſlide. He who has ſaid, *God is my All; and beſides him, there is nothing in Heaven or Earth, which I deſire*, cannot be miſerable,

ſerable, or afraid, though the Earth trembled under him, and the Heavens were all in a Flame over him. He knows in whom he has truſted, and in whom he rejoyces; and his Joy nothing can take from him. He has caſt a Foundation on the Rock of Ages, he has built upon Eternal Foundations, and ſhall ſtand faſt for ever, as the Faithful Witneſs in Heaven.

And if you take this Courſe, and lay hold of your Happineſs thus, it will not ſo eaſily ſlip out of your Hands, nor ſhall it lie in the power of every trifling Miſery to abuſe you; but your Life will be ſtrong and even, comfortable and uniform; neither inſolent, nor dejected; neither abuſed by a falſe Happineſs, nor by a pretended Miſery: But you will know and uſe every Thing right, you ſhall be free from the Inroads of Sorrows, Troubles, and Griefs; and nothing ſhall ſhake your Quiet, or diſturb your Peace, but your Sins, and the Wrath of God, which are juſt Cauſe of Trouble and Terrour, and will be unavoidable to a Mind ne'er ſo firm, compact, and well built; for they pierce the Soul, and weaken all its Strength; ſully all its Beauty, and diſ-

compoſe

compoſe its Order, and turn all into Horrour, Confuſion, and Amazement; into Cloud and Darkneſs, that the Man has loſt his Way, himſelf, and his Happineſs, for the preſent; and nothing but an humble Repentance can retrieve his ſad Condition: And his Miſeries are not melancholy and conceited, but real and ſincere, ſad and unavoidable, till the Mercy of God ſhall dawn upon his Repentance, and the Light of his Countenance begin to break in upon his Soul, reſembling the Night and *Chaos*, and the Horrours of the Flaming Deep, and the Dark and Liquid Fires. But this is not the Condition you tax your ſelf with, or to which I am applying Remedies by your Order: They are the Oppreſſions of Fancy and Ignorance, and the Inſults of Miſtake, I am treating of; to which you unneceſſarily expoſe your ſelf; for nothing but Sin has a Right to make you miſerable; no, not the Loſs of your Eldeſt Son, and your greateſt Hope; who is to you as a part of your own Soul, and whom you love more than Life: No, not the Loſs of your Friend, your Eſtate, or your Reputation; for our Happineſs can live without all theſe, and thrive, and

be in good Health; for there is some thing within, that not only supports but chears and triumphs the Soul; that not only feeds, but feasts it with the brightest Joys, such as the Soul it self knows, but a Stranger intermeddles not with: And he is best acquainted with them, who is stripp'd barest of Humane Comforts, and is farthest remov'd from sensible Joys, that darken and undervalue the Mind, that are no more than polish'd Pebbles: but the other are rough Diamonds, of inestimable Value to them who know them, as the others are of the utmost Contempt.

If your Blood, or Humours of your Body have any Hand in this Matter, then Physick is the best Advice you can take; and without it, other Advice may prove ineffectual: As on the one Hand, the Body must be severely kept under; so on the other Hand, Care must be taken to preserve its Health, and keep it in Order, that it may not prove a troublesome and unserviceable Companion of the Soul: Therefore Bleeding sometimes may be as useful as a Sermon, and equally help to bring the Body into Subjection to the Mind. The first Care is due to the Soul,

and

and the next to the Body; which, if indiſpos'd, or out of Order, the Soul is like to be no ſmall Sufferer, and its Operations broken and diſturb'd, difficult and impotent, though ne'er ſo cultivated by Reaſon or Philoſophy, by Diſcourſe and Abſtinence; becauſe its Organ is out of Tune, and works irregularly, on which it has ſo great a Dependence during this Life. If the Spleen overflow, all the bright Proſpect of the Soul will be overcaſt, and the chearful Face of Heaven will be cover'd with Clouds; and we cannot reaſon our ſelves out of this miſerable Condition, or recover our former Happineſs, by all the Diſcourſes of Philoſophy. Proper Phyſick muſt help in this Caſe, becauſe the Indiſpoſition is in the Body; which, by means of the Animal Spirits, is communicated to the Soul.

But chiefly, and always, and in all Caſes, you ſhall call upon God, the great Comforter, and Deliverer; and you ſhall find Prayer to ſurpaſs all other Means; becauſe he to whom it is addreſs'd, is infinitely powerful and good. And he will ſend his Angel to charm your Grief, and correct your Body, and render the

the Operations both of it and the Soul, uniform and harmonious; and proſper all your Labours of Vertue, and ſettle you in the Peace and Joys of Religion, and an humble Piety; of Vertue, and a holy Life; that nothing ſhall be able to diſturb your Happineſs, or intercept your Courſe, or cloud and ſtorm your Paſſage. And when your Prayers are heard, let them immediately be ſucceeded by the warmeſt Praiſes; which are the Crown and Perfection of our Devotions, and are the beſt of the Offerings of God: And for failing here, many loſe the Anſwer of their Prayers, while they ſacrifice the Blind and the Lame, and are devout to little purpoſe. And, indeed, there is a great deal of Self-intereſt in Prayer; and a Man may have both his Eyes on himſelf while he is on his Knees: But in the Sacrifice of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, all the Deſire of our Soul is to the God of Mercy and Goodneſs, while he is better to us, and more charming than any of his Gifts; and our Souls are ſatisfied, even as it were with Marrow and Fatneſs, while our Mouth praiſes him with joyful Lips; offering the Religion of Angels, and

the Sacrifice of Cherubims, and the Anthem and the Chorus of all Heaven.

And, indeed, mere Prayer, without Praiſes and Thanksgivings, is but Begging at the beſt Hand; and all the while we are ſtaring at Heaven, our Thoughts are upon our ſelves: 'Tis a Trading in Devotion, and Turning to God when we cannot help our ſelves, nor find Help in Man: And he holds up his Hands to his own Intereſt, and implores his own Advantage. And what Religion is there in all this? And who made him to differ from a fawning and a begging Courtier? But he whoſe Devotions are Praiſe and Love, is ſincere, and truly religious: But the other, may be a Tradeſman or a Merchant in Devotion; and he will pray till his Prayers are heard, and no longer, till he wants a new Bleſſing; but his Praiſes and Thankſgivings are never heard, becauſe his Devotions never were ſincere or generous; for then his Heart would be all inflam'd with Love and Gratitude to the Infinite Goodneſs, who condeſcends to hear him, and from the higheſt Heavens to mind what he ſays, and grant his Requeſts, in ſpight of all his Sins, and numberleſs Provocations; and gives him a Bleſſing inſtead of a Puniſhment,

a Re-

a Reward instead of Correction. This ought to make us all love, and thank, and praise; and dissolve us into Wonder and Admiration, into perpetual Hymns and Psalms. To this Devotion let me warm you to the utmost, and all that read; and thus our Prayers shall never miss being heard, and returning upon us in Blessings and Mercies. But he who, like a Dog, waits and begs till he is heard, and as soon as ever he has receiv'd what he waited and begg'd for, is immediately gone, and seen no more till his Wants return, must remember that God is not mocked; and that he shall bend his Knees long, and in vain, till he is convinc'd that God is not mock'd, nor can be deceiv'd by the Hypocrisie, or wrong'd by the Ingratitude of any Man.

On this Subject I have been the longer, to warn you and others of the Impiety, and Mischiefs, and Ingratitude of failing in our Thanksgivings to God, whose Goodness and Mercies towards us never fail: Nay, to excite you to abound in them, as the Love of God abounds towards us.

I am, Madam, &c.

LET

LETTER XXVI.

SIR,

I Have not yet fulfill'd the Desires of your last, nor would the little Time I have to spare allow me; but you are, notwithstanding, sufficiently assured of my Services for you. Nor are you mistaken when you believe me your real Friend, because you have Reason so to do.

I cannot serve you at present equal to my Desires; but that does not lessen my Good Will or Friendship towards you, which you have, on so many Occasions, experienc'd to be firm and sincere.

The last Office I had the Happiness to render you, abundantly confirms the Truth of what I say: Wherein I acted beyond my Ability; and had more Regard to Friendship, than Power. And wherein I have fallen short in serving you now, you may expect, when Time and Ability will permit, that I shall more than make Amends. This your Merit extorts from me, and from most others who have the Happiness to know you; in whom are found Accomplishments that are not common; and such a Readiness

Readineſs to ſerve all others, as deſerves that all others ſhould ſerve you. And this you ſhall find me ready to do to the utmoſt of my Power; and farther you will not expect: And wherein my Services prove ineffectual, you will not impute it to my Neglect.

I wiſh your Worldly Affairs had permitted you to have writ larger on the excellent and noble Subjects your Letter has but touch'd on, becauſe they are uſeful and ſolid, fitted to Life and Happineſs, that I and all that read might be the better.

But this is the common Miſchief of Worldly Affairs, that they choak the Spiritual, and ſtop up the Way to Heaven, as our Saviour has ſaid; and therefore great is the Danger and Miſchief of them: For, *What ſhall it profit a Man, if he ſhould gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul?* The Loſs is too great for the Advantage, and infinitely out-balances it. And he who would every Day ask himſelf that great and uſeful Queſtion, would be much edified and advantag'd thereby: He would ſee the Difference betwixt Temporal and Eternal, betwixt his Soul and his Body, betwixt this Life and Eternal Life: Nor would he ſo eaſily abuſe himſelf, and his higheſt Intereſt, and ſlight that that is infinitely greateſt,

greateſt, and wiſeſt, and happieſt; and amuſe himſelf with trifles and Miſery, and loſe his Soul for nothing.

Let nothing therefore hereafter come betwixt you and your Soul, betwixt you and Heaven, for every thing is little compar'd with either, and miſerable too, and for all that, not to be had without a great deal of Miſery. Wherefore then ſhould we let our Thoughts dwell any longer on the World? Or wander from our Happineſs and Intereſt, and follow every Impertinence and Miſery, and dwell on every thing but our Buſineſs? Let this Miſery be far from you hereafter, and this greateſt Folly; and when I hear from you next, I hope it will contain things worthy of your Baptiſm and your Hopes, of Faith and the humane Life, and then you ſhall be the better for Writing, and I for Reading; you will be employed about your Happineſs, and about that which you will always approve of, for what will every thing elſe ſignifie when Death ſhall call for you? And ſingle you out amongſt all the Millions of the Living, and tear you away from all your worldly Enjoyments, and from all that in which you put your Truſt and your Happineſs, and ſtrip you naked as you were born, and leave you nothing but your Piety and

your

your Vertue, your Religion and your Hopes, they ſhall have Leave to paſs with you, but nothing elſe; your Gold and your Silver muſt ſtop there; and there they will leave you, and you them, and you ſhall own you have toil'd in vain, and ſpent your Soul on that which is not Bread, which cannot croſs the Grave, nor influence the Years of Eternity.

Therefore let me adviſe you to lay out all your Time on Eternity, on ſecuring thoſe Joys that never fail, and then you ſhall be truly wiſe and happy, for ever rich and glorious, and you ſhall not labour in vain; neither ſhall your Labours be in the Houſe of a Stranger, nor ſhall a Prodigal Heir riot in the Purchaſe of your Soul, but all you have got ſhall be your own for ever; ſhall ſerve you here and hereafter, and crown you through eternal Ages; for the Labours of Piety never die, and Vertue is immortal. Would you never labour in vain? Then be a Servant to Religion, apply your ſelf to God, and beſtow your ſelf and your Works on him, who will comfort you when you are departing, and make Death a Joy and an Intereſt; lovely and deſireable, a Friend and a Benefactor, and a great Deliverer, reſcuing

you

you from all the Miseries of Life, which no Philosophy was able to do; nor Money, nor Honours, nor Parts, nor Confidence; and secure you from the hideous Yawn of the Grave, and all the Malice of a Dissolution, which shall not be able to hurt your Interest or diminish your Glory, but shall give them an infinite Increase, and make you greater and happier for ever; and whenever you write, let this be the perpetual Subject, for why should you amuse your self any longer with that which will last but a Moment, and then disappear for ever, but leave an eternal Misery and Disapointment behind it? What is there on Earth can entertain you equal to Heaven, and the Hopes of Heaven? Earthly Riches will not last long, and torment while they last, and Cares and Fears are all they purchase, unless we give them to the Poor; earthly Beauty scarce lasts while we are looking at it, but dies like Lightning, as soon as 'tis seen, and vanishes for ever; if Ambition has seized your Soul, and you pursue the Delusions of Glory, you deserve the Tears that are poured on a Hearse, and the Lamentations of Windows, for you are dead to Reason and Happiness, and your Peace has given

up

up the Ghoſt; and you, a Shade, are purſuing a Shadow that ſhall mock you eternally, and delude your Graſp, and fool all your Labours, and laugh at all your Pains; now climbing the craggy barren Precipice; anon near the very Top, and looſing your Hold, tumbling and daſh'd through all the vaſt Deſcent. Return, fair *Shunamite*, return, and tread the ſure and ſhining Paths of Vertue, that lead through Joys to everlaſting Joys, from Pleaſures to Pleaſures, from a Life of Peace to an Eternity of Glory, in which no Deluſion ſhall abuſe you, nor ſhall you toil infinitely for nothing, nor ſhall your Life be a Labouring Dream, and a Viſion of Trouble, but your Peace ſhall be as the River, and you wiſe as an Angel of God, to diſcern between Folly and Happineſs, between Miſery and Wiſdom.

Let your own Experience teach you better than a Thouſand Inſtructors, ask Counſel of it; ask it what has any thing profitted out of Religion? If Vice be not the greateſt Impoſtor in the World, if it is any thing but Labour and Sorrow, Diſappointment and Deluſion, Fancy and Sickneſs, Error and Extravagance? The Toil of Life, and Sting of Death? And

Terrour

rrour of the Grave, the universal ountain of Misery, the great Defor- ity, the Enemy of Reason, the hips and Snakes of the Mind, the orm of the Breast, Clouds and Dark- s, Horror and Stupidity, an evil me, and a lasting Ruin, the Te- nt of the Grave, and of outer-Dark- s, the Blast of Life, and the Seal Death, and the Triumph of the l Spirits?

Enough, my Friend, of Labour and row, enough of Folly and of Death, Day is far spent, and the Sha- s grow long, and the Night is at nd, which your Silver Hairs confirm, the Snow that lies on your Head, the many Years which press you h their Weight; therefore be wise haste, and run to your Happiness, the Night overtake you, in which Man works, and you weep for ever vain.

I am, Sir, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXVII.

MADAM,

YOU ſhall excuſe this Trouble, w
have commanded it; and the ſtreng
of your Commands ſhall anſwer
the Weakneſs of my Performan
But why would ſhe who has read
much of that which is beſt, deſire
read what I ſhall write? I know yo
Forwardneſs to be inſtructed, who
need it; I know your Backwardneſs
inſtruct, who are moſt able. In
which, you ſignalize your Humili
and ſhew a Modeſty that's rare, a
ſeldom ſeen.

This is not the firſt Time you ha
commanded me to obey againſt my w
or that you have experienc'd my O
dience; but I could wiſh it might be
laſt. The World is crowded with Advi
and I of all the World, am the unfitt
to give it; and perhaps, you of m
others, the leaſt Need to receive it; b
this is the Way of your Humility, a
thus you conceal your ſelf from
World.

Much you ſigh, I underſtand, af
the Retirements of the Deſart: And
loanſome, Religion that converſes wi
Ange

Angels, and is ruled only by the Spirit of God; thus you would exhale your Soul to God, and offer the Sacrifices of pureſt Prayer, enflam'd by the Spirit of God, flaming with ardent Vows, and the Labours of Vertue, and the Toils of the Spiritual Field; there you would watch and pray the Nights, and conſume the Days in Faſts and Labour, in Love and Sorrow, in Hymns and ſacred Odes; now converſing with the Angel, now with the immediate Spirit of God, now with your own Soul, anon grapling with the evil Spirit, and ſweating Blood againſt the Importune temtation, and the Violence of the Tempter, now examining your Mind, now laying the Fleſh in Chains, now checking the Motions of the evil Spirit, and the Rage of the Dæmons, ſlaving the Appetite, muzling the Paſſions, arraigning the very Thoughts, burning towards Heaven, tranſported with the Love of Vertue, and enrag'd at the Deformity of Vice, ſhining with Faſts, illuſtrated with Prayer, encompaſs'd with Angels in the Stations of the Night, in the heavenly Vigil, and the devout Watch.

This is the Life you ſigh after, and on which your Diſcourſes and your Letters love to dwell, and the Flame that burnt

in

in the Holy *Arſenius* conſumes you, an
the Fire that waſted *Hilarion* rages i
your Soul, and the Deſires of St *Jerom*
are reſtleſs in you. But remember, tha
your Cloſet is a Cell and a Deſart, an
your Heart an Oratory and a Chapel
and that the Angels are not far fro
Holy Prayer where-ever it's offer'd; an
that you are ſtill in the Right Road t
Heaven, though in the midſt of th
Troubles and Temptations of the World
for the great Guide and Traveller ſays
That *through many Tribulations we mu*
enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, yea, an
all they who live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſha
ſuffer Perſecution; and that you may
much as you deſire, in the World, an
equal all the Mortifications of the Deſar
and the Labours of thoſe who ſo ofte
talk'd with Angels Face to Face, and o
ten ſaw the excellent Glory, and hear
the Voice, and liv'd upon the Borders o
Heaven, and were at once Citizens o
the *Jeruſalem* that's below, and of tha
which is above too.

I am, Madam, &c.

LET

REFLECTIONS ON Divers Subjects.

CHAP. I.

That the Peace of Mind an Holy Life gives, is preferrable to all the Pleasures in the World.

PEace of Mind is a Happiness so great, and withal so necessary, that though we had all other Happinesses which the World affords, but wanted this one, which is, indeed, all Happinesses, yet should we be compleatly miserable. For, What are Purples and Treasures to a troubled, to a sickly, and a wounded Mind, that can relish neither Musick nor Conversation, Friendships or Love, nor the Table, nor Business, nor Divine Retirement; but is

always haunted and disturb'd by it self and frighted at its own gloomy Shadow and goes mourning without the Sun, pa and sad, without Smile or Joy, languish ing and disorder'd, broken and abus dark and benighted, clouded and glo my; that can neither hear the Voice Singing-Men or Singing-Women, n share the Mirth of Feasts, nor listen the Voice of the Charmer, nor is chear by the Spring, nor comforted by t neareſt Approaches of the Sun, nor concern'd when it retires far into t South? For he is still the same miserab Man, and can taste nothing but his So rows, and is insensible to any lesser M sery. The only Advantage he draws fro his Condition, is, that it drowns all oth Miseries, as well as Joys; and the Nig and the Day are to him alike: His Bre is darker than the Shadows of the Nig the thick Darkness is not to be pier by the Light; for he has bound his Sorro upon him, and wrapp'd his Miseries abo him; and has said, *I shall go heavily all Days of my Life, I shall go mourning wi out the Sun, I am divorc'd from Peace Innocence, from Angels and Joy, from Spirit, and from my self. I have made perpetual League with Sorrow, and an an Agreement with lasting Misery, tha my Misery be greater than I am able to*

Th

This is a ſad, but true Deſcription of the Miſery of Sin and Guilt, of the Man that has forſaken his Intereſt and his Joy, his God and his Angel, his Piety and his Hopes; and is gone over to Folly and Ruin, to a Condition that is written all over, *Lamentations, and Mourning, and Woe.*

But the Chriſtian Life is the Reverſe of this ſad Deſcription: Its Peace is as the River; and Glory, and Honour, and Peace is upon every Soul that lives well: His Breaſt is clear as the Sun, his Mind is chearful as the Morning, and eaſie as Angels, and harmonious as the Bleſſed; free as the Winds, and ſofter than the Air, and undiſturb'd as the upper Air that touches Heaven, as does his Mind.

In the Chriſtian Life is every Joy, and every Treaſure, the Miniſtry of Angels, the Favour of God, a ſtreight Reaſon, the Effuſions of Grace, the Comforts of the Spirit, Outward and Inward Peace, radiant Hopes, Supernatural Faith, preſenting Heavens, and all the Raptures of an undefiled Love, the Ecſtacies of Contemplators, the Triumphs of Martyrs, the Joys of Saints, Hymns and Praiſes.

CHAP. II.

Of the true Conqueſt of the World.

IF the Conqueſt of part of the Worl be glorious, what is the Conqueſt o the Whole? a Conqueſt never yet mad but in the Chriſtian Life, that ſhews u a better World than this, and brighte Manſions; and has rais'd us above th Conſuls and *Cæſars*, and above all th Tyrants of the Earth, who have tor the World, and diſturb'd Mankind, bu neither conquer'd the World nor them ſelves; while an humble Chriſtian do both: And his Life is greater than all th Hiſtories of the Rages and the Fevers o *Alexander*, while he really performs tha which they never ſo much as ſet about they ſhould; and inſtead of leading A mies and Fleets, and waſting Countrie and throwing down Cities, and marchin over the World like a Peſtilence, or Storm, or a ſickly Conſtellation, hav ſubdued Paſſions, that were theſe Conqu rors Maſters, and triumph'd over App tites and Deſires, that haul'd and dragg them up and down the World; and enjoy all that is good; triumphing over Fur and Folly, over Rage and Luſt; and mad ſuch a Conqueſt of the World, as is only f for a Great Man to own. CHA

CHAP. III.

That there is no more Happineſs in the World, than the Chriſtian Life affords.

WE wrong our ſelves when we fanſie there is; we firſt abuſe our Judgment, and then our Happineſs: But Experience deceives no Man; but him that has a Mind to be knowingly miſerable. Whoever can take up with Deluſion and Shew, may find Entertainment enough in the World, and more than he will be able long to bear: But whoever loves a wiſe and ſolid Happineſs, and would neither abuſe his Judgment, nor his Experience, muſt court Vertue for that Portion; he muſt make his Addreſſes to that Religion that abounds in Happineſs, and is repleniſh'd with Wiſdom; *the Merchandice of which is better than the Merchandice of Silver; and the Gain whereof, than fine Gold: She is more precious than Rubies; and all the Things we can deſire, are not to be equall'd to her: All good Things together come with her, and innumerable Riches are in her Hands; for ſhe is a Treaſure unto Men, that never fails:* Her Joys are ſolid and number-

leſs, her Peace is as the River, her Hopes are charming, and her Inheritance endures for ever. The very Hopes of an Everlaſting Heaven, well grounded, is a better Fortune than the *Roman* Empire: 'Tis more than *Caſar* drew out of all his Conqueſts, or than many Crowns can afford.

CHAP. IV.

That Humility is the true Way to Happineſs.

OUR Saviour has ſaid it, and that is beyond a Volume of Proofs: And even Reaſon ſays it, as well as Religion: Experience ſays it; and he who can count the Furies and Uneaſineſs, the Racks and Diſgraces, the Labours and Torments of Pride, may count the Eaſe and Peace, the Wiſdom and Joys, the Security and Satisfactions of an humble Spirit. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly*, is as far beyond Philoſophy, as he that ſaid it, was beyond the Philoſophers. That one Precept was enough to calm the whole World, and lay Paſſion and Ambition aſleep, and compoſe the Violence of Armies, and the Madneſs of Stoiciſm, that imagin'd that Pride

Pride could be at reſt, and Inſolence at eaſe; and to reſcue the World from all its Miſery and Miſtakes, the Blind out of the Hands of the Blind, and the World from Philoſophy. This one Precept directs to a perfect Wiſdom, and an entire Happineſs; *The Meek-ſpirited ſhall poſſeſs the Earth, and be refreſh'd in the Multitude of Peace*: Happineſſes, the moſt ſucceſsful Ambitions never knew, that never yet poſſeſs'd the Earth, nor ever were refreſh'd in the Multitude of Peace; but are always oppreſs'd with Toil and Labour, Glory and Rage, Diſappointments and Fears: And all the Men whoſe Hands were mighty, have found nothing; and take away their Ungodlineſs, and thou ſhalt find none. The Proud are robb'd of all that is eaſie and peaceful, humble and harmonious, and ſleep with all the Fury and Diſorder of the Day; while the Humble are quiet as the Night, and undiſturb'd as the Grave and the Deſart, and chearful as Angels, and Muſick, and temperate Wine, or the Feaſts of Love; his Soul ſhall dwell at eaſe, and his Seed ſhall inherit the Earth; he ſhall have all the Honours he flees; he has drunk of the Brook, therefore ſhall he lift up his Head: For though the Lord be high, yet hath he Reſpect unto the Lowly: As for the Proud, he beholdeth them a-far off.

He has trod the humble Path of the Crucified *Jesus*, and ſhall be glorified with him for ever. And whoſoever ſhall take upon him the Form of a Servant, and make himſelf of no Reputation, as did the Holy *Jeſus*, ſhall with him be highly exalted and glorified for ever: He ſhall riſe from Diſgraces and Contempt, from a miſerable and injurious World, to Crowns and Rewards, to Everlaſting Peace and Glory. For there are none more under the Eye and Care of the Almighty Goodneſs; who, though he be high, yet hath he regard unto the Lowly, while he beholds the Proud a-far off: And he who puts down the Mighty from their Seat, exalts the Humble and Meek: And he who regarded the Lowlineſs of the Virgin-Mother, has a ſpecial Regard to the Humble throughout all Generations, for they come neareſt the Example of him by whoſe Name they are called; who came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter; and humbled himſelf even to the Death of the Croſs; and gave his Back to the Smiters, and his Cheeks to them that pluck'd off the Hair; and appear'd without Form or Comelineſs in the World, in all the Aggravations of Humility, and at an infinite Diſtance from Pride, when he might have deſcended Lord and Ruler of the World he made, attended

attended by Millions of Cherubims, and Ten Thouſand flaming Fires miniſtring unto him, and have put out the Glory of the *Ceſars*; but he choſe the Virgin's Womb, that he might open the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers, and teach us by Humility, to be greater than the *Ceſars*, becauſe like him.

CHAP. V.

That to be a Chriſtian, is to rejoice always.

REjoice in the Lord always, and again I ſay rejoice, ſays the Apoſtle, who gloried even in Tribulations; for ſays he, *if Tribulations abound, then do Conſolations abound much more*; and if a Chriſtian can rejoice in Tribulations, what is it ſhould make him ſorrowful? His Breaſt is Heaven, and his Hope is Heaven. Angels hover about his Soul, Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt make their abode with him, and he is commanded by the Holy Spirit *to rejoice evermore*: And he who is the Comforter will enable him abundantly ſo to do, and make his Peace as Heaven, and his Triumphs as the Shouts of Nations. Salva-

tion and Victory are with him, and he dwells in the Preſence that's Fulneſs of Joy, and ſtands before him, at whoſe Right Hand there is Pleaſure for evermore; nor is wholly excluded from the Beatifick Viſion, even in this Life, for he makes all his Goodneſs to paſs before him, though he cannot ſee his Glory; for that would over-power Life, and he would die of the Sight, for none can ſee the Face of God, and live.

Every Day of the Chriſtian's Life, is a freſh Scene of Joy, and is crowded with new Happineſſes; his Hopes grow daily brighter, and his Heaven clearer; and his Soul more Spiritual, and his very Body more refin'd; and new Ecſtaſies are kindled, and ſtronger Loves deſcend, and more Angels frequent him, and enter into nearer Converſe with him; and careſs ſofter, and wondrous Scenes move in his Breaſt, and a Stranger meddles not with his Joy: The Bleſſings are ſhower'd down thick upon him, and are about him, and in him; and every Day brings him nearer to him, who is all the Deſire of his Soul, for whom alone he lives; for whom he would die, that he might be ſatisfy'd with the Plenty of his Houſe, beholding the fair Beauty of the Lord, to whom the Heavens themſelves are obſcure and dark, and the Angels ignorant and deform'd.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

That a Christian need not mind the Interests of the World.

SEek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you, says the infinite *Jesus*. Whoever is a true Christian shall have enough of that that's best; he has God himself, which is beyond all other things, the Lord himself is the Portion of his Inheritance: And therefore the Lot must needs be fallen unto him in a fair Ground, and having God, he has all things. He has Christ, by whom the Worlds were made, and therefore is like to have a large Portion in both; he is in the Favour of him to whom all Power is given in Heaven and Earth, who will use it for his Interest, and the Spirit that is in him gives him Joys greater than the World and all its Interests put together: For a Man's Happiness consists not in the Abundance of the Interests of this Life, but in being happy, and he is happiest who is happy without 'em; for such a Man's Happiness is not encumbred nor disturbed, nor uncertain'd by a Thousand Accidents, that wanton in the things of this Life; but is bound fast upon his Soul, and he

he has got his Happineſs within him, and his Joys are ſeal'd up where the People never laid 'em, and where no Tyrant can come at 'em. But when this World can contribute to his Happineſs he ſhall have it too; for the Scripture ſays, *all are his*, the Promiſes of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Freedom of the Chriſtian Life.

HE who is a Chriſtian indeed, is free; and he who is not, is a Slave, though crown'd. What though his Hands are not bonnd, nor his Feet put into Fetters, he is chain'd by his Luſts, and tied down by his Paſſions, and trampled upon by his Appetites, inſulted by Fears, and broken by Sorrows: And then what ſignifies the Diadem about his Head, or the Ermins, or the Purples, that hide the Man from us, but not from himſelf? Power and Reſpect may eaſe and abuſe him a little, but a little Time will wear out that childiſh Happineſs; and he will own that nothing can make a Man greater and happier, but more Vertue and more Religion: And if

he

he has made no advance here, he has not ſo much as begun to be happy or great; for Birth, and Crowns, and Riches, and Power, are no Part of the Man, nor of his Happineſs.

But in the Chriſtian Life, there is perfect Liberty and perfect Freedom, ſolid Entertainments, noble Joys, an unbyaſs'd Reaſon, and a ſtreight Judgment, and a free Choice, unbyaſs'd by Paſſion, unprejudic'd by Luſt, nor wrong'd by Cuſtom; as ſoon as we ſee our Intereſt, we are at Liberty to purſue it, without being encumbred with the World, or our own Follies and irregular Appetites, and nothing hinders us from being wiſe and happy.

CHAP. VIII.

That Love is the higheſt thing in the Chriſtian Religion.

BY *this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another*, ſays our Saviour; and *he that loves another, has fulfilled the Law*, and there is no other Commandment greater than that of the perfect Love of God and our Neighbour. Theſe Sayings out of the Mouth

of

of him that ſpake as never Man ſpake, are ſufficient to demonſtrate the Height and Excellency of Love: That 'tis the beſt thing in this World, or in the World to come; that it comes from God, and returns to God, that by it the World is bleſs'd and preſerv'd, that 'tis the Soul of Angels, and the Heaven of the Soul of Man: Without it, there is neither Peace, nor Order, nor Happineſs, and with it, is Heaven, and whatſoever is charming and deſireable, delightful or entertaining, 'tis the laſt Perfection of Piety, that always reſolves it ſelf into a flaming and a boundleſs Love to God and Man; 'tis the utmoſt that the beſt grown Religion can come to, or that the Angels themſelves can reach: And 'tis, in all that have it, *a pure Influence, flowing from the Glory of the Almighty, and therefore can no defiled thing fall into it.*

'Tis Love that fulfils all other Duties, and makes Religion charming, and renders Vertue choice; that we would practiſe it, though we ſuffered for it: For the Joys of Love will drown all Sufferings, and make even Sufferings themſelves pleaſing and advantageous. Love will make every thing as eaſie as it ſelf, and ſhed its Joys on all the ſeveral Duties of the Chriſtian Life, and trample on Difficulties, and inſult Dangers, and chal-

challenge the utmoſt Hardſhips and Labours, and turn 'em into Eaſe and Pleaſure, and the greateſt Loſſes, into the greateſt Intereſts; and whoever is bleſs'd by God with the Perfection of Love, is bleſs'd with the moſt perfect Religion, and the beſt Life, and the pureſt Soul: For he who loves perfectly, is ready to do and ſuffer every thing, and would rather die than live; that he might love brighter, and ſtronger, and clearer, and ſee Face to face the Infinite Beloved, the Fountain of Love and Beauty, and Perfection; him who made Love, and who gives and beſtows Love, the greateſt Bleſſing in Heaven or Earth; the Bleſſing on which the Angels feed and live, the Manna of the Soul, a purer thing than Reaſon it ſelf, as well as an eaſier and more exalted.

What can we ſuppoſe, render'd St. *John* the Diſciple whom *Jeſus* lov'd above all the reſt; even above St. *Peter* himſelf, to whom he gave the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and in ſo particular and repeated a Manner, the common Care of feeding his Church, but that he lov'd moſt, and therefore was moſt belov'd, and allow'd to lean on that Boſom, that was ſofter and warmer than the Breaſt of an Angel, a Privilege we are not told was allow'd any of the other Apoſtles;

ſtles; for if it were, it had not been told as a particular Favour allow'd to him, and therefore his Writings glow with Love; and were written in the fulleſt Effuſions of the Spirit of Love, and he himſelf was to remain till the Infinite Lover came again: And 'tis ſaid, that when old and decrepit, and unable to talk longer Diſcourſes, this was the whole length of his Sermon, *Brethren, love one another.* And our Saviour himſelf ſays, That *'tis all the Law, and the Prophets, and above whole burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices.* 'Tis the old and the new Commandment, 'tis the great Teſt of the Chriſtian Religion; and oh! That it were again reſtor'd inſtead of Oaths or Sacraments; that a Chriſtian might be known and diſtinguiſh'd by his Sweetneſs and Goodneſs, by out-loving all others of another Religion; by a greater Gentleneſs, and a larger Mercy, by Modeſty and Obedience, by Humility and Subjection, by forgiving Enemies and gaining Friends, and then we ſhould need no Laws; for they are made for the outrageous and the furious, or the Laws would need no Sanctions, for Men would obey on Conſcience, not on Force or Wrath.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

That Learning is not of that Importance in the Chriſtian Religion.

MAY they find Mercy in that Day, who firſt debauch'd, debas'd, and ſtill continue to adulterate the Simplicity that is in Chriſt, with vain Philoſophy, and Science falſely ſo called; for they will need it in that Day, that ſhall aſſert and demonſtrate the Glories, and the Authority, and the Terrours of the plain Inſtitution of Chriſt. And if People are in love with Learning, where is it ſo richly to be found, as in the plain and humble Religion of him, in whom are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom? Curioſity and uſeleſs Knowledge, is not Learning, but a thinking Ignorance; a great deal of Pains and Study, to be ne'er the wiſer, and ne'er the better; but more ignorant, and more arrogant, and at a greater diſtance from their Buſineſs and Happineſs, than plain Natural Parts would have ſet them. And with how many Tears ſhall they wiſh they had ſpent that Time in living, and endeavouring ſtill to live better, which they loſe in ſtudying that which they (againſt the trueſt Judgment of Things) will be calling

calling Learning. [For that is truly a ſtrong Knowledge of our higheſt Intereſt, and a learned practical Uſe of that Knowledge, whoſe Life and Perfection lies in Action; that is plain in the Notion, and whoſe only Difficulty lies in the doing.] That requires little Study, much leſs that of a whole Life's Reading; but much Humility and Life, much Contention to reduce our ſelves, and abate our Follies and Vanities; and, amongſt others, that of a fond, an idle, and oſtentatious Learning, to which ſo many Men have dedicated the Travail of their Lives, when they ſhould have ſpent it more uſefully on themſelves and others, in the Acquiſitions of Humility and Love, in minding their great Buſineſs, their own and others Salvations; in compariſon of which, all the Learning in the World is wretched Trifling and Ignorance. And, in one Word, The beſt Chriſtian is the beſt Scholar: And he is the moſt learned Man, who lives moſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

That our Saviour's Life is the great Pattern we are to follow.

IN the Life of our Saviour was all Perfection: His very Looks were Inſtructions, his Air was better than a Homily, and his Mien than a Sermon from any other: His very Silence talk'd, and was beyond whatever any other Man ſpake.

Sic oculos, ſic ille manus, ſic ora ferebat.

Whoever follows this Pattern, cannot but live up to the Wiſdom and Purity of the Chriſtian Religion, let his Parts be never ſo mean; for he copies after the moſt perfect Original, and tranſcribes the great Author of Perfection: He traces a Life that never made one wrong Step, and included in it, the Perfection of all Phyloſophy and Religion, and ſhewed the way of Heaven, and the Path of Life.

There was in it, nothing affected or miſtaken, nothing ſwollen or ignorant, nothing mean or diſordered, trivial or ambitious; but was ſacred and uniform, conſtant and perfect, and invincible, charitable

ritable and Infinite; above Error or Malice, triumphing over all the Arts and Strength of the Enemy, that bore upon him from both Worlds; but were forc'd to give back through all his wondrous Life, and confeſs his Divinity, and the ſacred Awe of his Perſon, and the Terrours of his Preſence.

And now, how little is the Example of a Philoſopher, or a Hero, to ſuch a Perfection as this? [Or who of all the Sons of Men may be compar'd to the Son of God; in whom the beſt of us live, and move, and have our Being, whom to imitate imperfectly, is our higheſt Glory and Perfection?]

Therefore whoever propoſes to lead a Life becoming the Name of Chriſt, muſt, above all Things, propoſe to follow the Example of Chriſt.

CHAP. XI.

Of Obſtinacy and Perſeverance.

ONly to begin, is to do nothing at all; or rather, to take ſome Pains to no purpoſe. 'Tis an obſtinate Perſeverance that rewards the ſtormy Paſſage with a Port, and the Agonies of Battel

Battel with Victory and Peace, with Triumphs and Lawrel. 'Tis that which breaks through all the Difficulties of Life, and preſſes ſtill forward to a happy End. To labour a little, and for a while, is only to court Diſgraces and Defeats, and multiply Inſtances of our Weakneſs and Folly, of our Cowardice, Sloth and Irreſolution. 'Tis to enter the Field with no other Deſign, but to be vanquiſh'd. But if we propoſe to conquer, we muſt reſolve to endure all the Labours of the Battel, to wade in Blood, and to be cover'd with Duſt, and to perſiſt to Death; ſtriving againſt the Importunity of Temptation, taking the whole Armour of God, that we may be able to withſtand in the Evil Day: That ſhall bring us to the dreadful Conflict; that ſhall prove our Force, and Teſt of our Religion; wherein our Force ſhall be prov'd, the Truth of our Religion try'd, and the Firmneſs of our Vertue aſcertain'd to our ſelves.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Miniſtry and Aſſiſtance of Good Spirits.

THeir Attendance on us is unqueſtionable, from the Authority of the Scriptures: *There Angels behold the Face of my Father; and they are ſent forth to miniſter to thoſe that are Heirs of Eternal Life.*

And yet, how little do we value or think of ſo great an Honour, though greater than all the Civil Honours of Crowned Heads! And yet, could we ſee the flaming Miniſter, though but for a Moment, his wondrous Beauty, and his Heavenly Mien, what amazing Tranſport would it cauſe? What Regard and Caution? What Fear and Love?

And yet we generally believe as if we ſaw, yet ſet no Value on the Honour, or the Advantage; ſeldom reflect on the many and uſeful Offices they perform to us; how oft they grapple with the Evil Spirit, and prevent the Danger, and divert a Ruin, and charm to Wiſdom.

CHAP. XIII.

That we must resolve to live after a different Fashion, from that of the World.

WE are sworn against the World in Baptism, and whoever is for it, is perjur'd; it opposes our Passage to a better World, and therefore we are to force our way through it, and to march as through an Enemy's Country, disputing our Passage, and fighting our way: And remember too, that the Flesh that marches with us is in the Enemy's Interest; and will revolt upon the least Opportunity or Advantage, and go over to the other Side, and the Flesh is part of our selves; therefore we are at the same Time engag'd in a War against our selves. And what Vigilance, what Caution, what Distrusts, what Labours, what Courage, what Resolutions are necessary to manage such a War? A War in which we are attack'd by our selves, and must fight against our selves: A War in which we have to do with potent and declared Enemies, and which is worse and more difficult with a treacherous Ally.

We

We are ſo be-ſet with the World, that we are almoſt encompaſs'd and ſurrounded by that Enemy; the worſt Condition Soldiers can be in. And, which is a deſperate and a ſad Conſideration, there is but one half of us true to our ſelves; and while the World fights us, the Fleſh betrays us; and while we have one Eye on the Enemy, we muſt have the other on our ſelves; or elſe, while we are conquering the World, we may be undone by the Fleſh.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Danger of the Inviſible Enemy.

WHO can tell the Strength, the Numbers, the Order, the Stratagems, or the Malice of this Enemy? An Enemy that durſt attack a Manhood united to, and ſupported by a Godhead, in thoſe terrible Conflicts of the Deſart. An Enemy that durſt ſtand the Preſence of an Infinite Strength, and Holineſs, and Wiſdom; and though thrice driven back, yet thrice changing his Ground, and thrice renewing the Battel, tormenting himſelf before his Time; for

for he knew who he was, and that his Arm was infinite, to ſave both himſelf, and all thoſe that come to him; and that his own Arm brought Salvation, though he could have prayed to the Father, who would have ſent him more than Twelve Legions of Angels; but he reſtrain'd his own Power, that the Scriptures might be fulfill'd; and kept back the Flaming Fires that ſtrugled to his Aſſiſtance, and ſtood all their Fury alone; the Rage of Powers, the Batteries of Principalities, the Storms of the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, the Malice, the Blaſphemies, and the dreadful Aſſaults of the Spiritual Wickedneſſes in High Places, when he had faſted Forty Days, and his Spirits impair'd, and his Conſtitution broke, that the Miniſtry of Angels was neceſſary; and he at laſt admitted their Services, to refreſh him after ſo much Agony and Struggle, after ſo much Temptation and Abſtinence, that endeavour'd to over-ſet Humane Nature.

But what are we in the Hands of ſuch an Enemy, that are not able to deal with the Temptation that is in our own Fleſh? Of an Enemy that we cannot ſo much as come to the Sight of, though he ſtands in the very Gate, and ſurrounds us? And if it were not that he that is

mighty to ſave, is in us, and that he th
is in us is greater than he that is in t
World, we ſhould be as the Duſt befo
the Wind, and as a Wheel, and ſo p
ſecuted and broke with the Tempe
that the Floods would go over our Soul
and the Waters would prevail, a
the Battel would go ſore againſt us
every Arrow would wound, and eve
Wound would be deadly, and eve
Death would be eternal; the Enem
would come on ſo faſt, that they wou
bear us down, and trample us und
their Feet, ſo maliciouſly and ſo violen
ly are they ſet againſt us; our Pow
and our Beauty would be deliver'd in
the Enemy's Hand, and there would
none to make Lamentation; and t
Prieſt, and the Virgin, and the Youn
Men would periſh in their ſeveral Te
ptations, with the Widow that ſhou
bewail with ſtrong Cries, and ſad a
lamentable Themes.

Here the whole Armour of the Goſp
is neceſſary; for the Contention is n
with Fleſh and Blood, but with all t
dreadful Orders of Devils, that ſta
rank'd in oppoſite Degrees to thoſe
Bleſſed Spirits, and act in oppoſite Min
ſteries; obſtructing our Salvation, a
toiling in our Eternal Ruin, with all t
Labours of Wit, and Induſtry, and M
lice

lice; roaring about the World, and seeking whom they may devour. And therefore, with what Agonies are we to endeavour, that we may be able to overcome, when press'd by innumerable Spirits; and to resist even unto Blood, striving against Sin?

But no Armour is sufficient, without large Assistances of the Holy Spirit of God: That alone is able to baffle and controul the Infernal Legions, to defeat their Malice, and infatuate their Industry, and over-rule their Power, and strengthen the Everlasting Chains of Darkness in which they are held. By it we may safely go on the Lion and the Adder, and tread the young Lion under our Feet. By it we are secur'd from the Pestilence that walks in Darkness, and from the Arrow that flies by Day, from Confidence and Pride, from Temptation and Despair, from an evil Life, and from Everlasting Death; from the Prince of the Winds, and from the Ruler of Darkness; from the Tempter, and the Accuser; and from the Mouth of the Lion.

CHAP. XV.

Of the Uſe of the Shield of Faith.

BUT, above all, taking the Shield of Faith, wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked are the Words of the Holy Ghoſt, dictating to the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*. How wondrous then is the Uſe of this Shield? How great the Power of Faith? And how great a Gift is that Faith, that triumphs over all the Malice and Power of Devils, and quenches the fiery Temptation, and delivers us from ſo many Dangers, and from ſo many Ruines? By Faith we truſt in him, whoſe Power is infinitely great to reſcue us, and whoſe Goodneſs is infinitely great to uſe that Power to our Aſſiſtance. By Faith we behold Heaven through the Cloud, and the Temptation: By this we view the Joy that is ſet before us, and the bright Manſions above, through all the Labours of the Croſs, through Poverty and Diſgrace, through Racks, and Agonies, and Death; and, which is more difficult, through Pleaſures that are ſweet, but mortal; that court, and murther; that charm the Eye, and butcher the Soul; that tempt the Fancy, and aſſaſſinate the Mind, and turn its Peace into the Horrours

rours of Hell, and the Diſorders of the Damned. This is the great Power of Faith, and this the Uſe of its wondrous Shield, that covers us from the Luxury and Inſolence of Proſperity, from the Arrogance and Cruelty of Greatneſs and Power, and from Pride that made Devils, and defac'd the Beauty of Angels, and ſent them flaming down from Heaven; that ſecures us from the Deſpairs of Miſery, and the Atheiſm of Want, by turning our Eyes to the Everlaſting Proſpect, by plying us with the Remembrance of brighter Honours, and firmer Happineſſes than any are offered us in this Life, where all is Impoſture and Deluſion, vexatious, ſhort and vain; the Iſſue of Labour, and the Parent of Miſery. But Faith re-minds us of a City that has Foundations, of Empire and Crowns, of an Eternal Treaſure, and an Infinite Joy, that ſhall triumph over Ages and Time, and ſhall for ever be young and new, beginning and unwaſted; and with this Proſpect bears us high, and towres us over all the little Things here below; the *Res Romanas, perituraque Regna. The glorious Nothings of a vain and empty World.*

CHAP. XVI.

Of Devotion.

'TIS the Flames of the Spirit of God, 'tis the Ardours of Love, 'tis the Warmths of Religion; 'tis that that unites the Soul and Heaven, that carries us up to God: 'Tis the Sanctification of the Paſſions, and that that ſets them above Humane Reaſon it ſelf: 'Tis that in which Nature and the World have nothing to do: 'Tis that by which we honour God, and guard our ſelves, and intercede for the Safety of the World, and triumph over Spiritual Wickedneſſes in High Places, and controul the Diſorders of Nature, and appeaſe the Wrath of Heaven. The Angels wait upon it, and chaſe its Flames, and aſcend with its Sacrifices. By it we triumph over Sin, and trample on Temptation, and chain the Evil Spirits, and bind our Luſts, and ſtrangle our Paſſions, and quench our Deſires. By it we obtain Favours, and avert Judgments, and rectifie Nature, and keep the Seaſons in order. By it we cleanſe the Soul, and refine Reaſon, and ennoble our Lives, and baniſh the Terrours of the Night, and turn the Arrow that flies by Day, and have Fellowſhip with the good Spirits,

and

and conquer the World, and reduce our ſelves, and ſtrengthen our Reaſon, and keep inferior Nature within its Bounds, and give Laws to Vice. By Devotion we riſe to the Perfection of our Souls, and draw down Succours againſt the Enemy. By Devotion we arrive at all the Joys of Love; its Ecſtacies and Vows, its Sweetneſſes and Faintings, its Taſtes and Deſires, and paſſionate Longings, its Raptures and Enjoyments. By Devotion we bleſs our Friends, and bleſs them that curſe us, into better Paſſions, and holier Minds, and grow more temperate, and leſs revengeful, and fuller of Heaven, and emptier of Earth, and leſſen our Follies, and enlarge our Wiſdom, and remove for a while to the other World, while the Body is alive. By Devotion we cure all the Diſeaſes of the Soul, and ſanctifie the Body; and by it we are truly ſpiritual and immortal, heavenly and divine.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Internal Exerciſes of the Mind.

THere is a Spiritual Kingdom within us, an Internal Religious Government, ſecret and wonderful Tranſactions,

where the Operations of the Spirit are perform'd, where the Soul is form'd, and moulded, and changed; where the Spirit of God acts and intercourſes with ours, in an unexpreſſible manner, and in ſuch a Way as no Humane Language can paint. Here paſs the Throws of Repentance, the inſenſible Changes of the Mind, the Travails of the New Birth, and the Labours of Regeneration. Here the undiſcernible Increaſes of Vertues, and Decays of Folly, the Withering of ill Habits, the Extirpation of Paſſions, and the ſecret Growths of Wiſdom and Piety; the Degrees of Grace, and the Increaſes of the Strength of the New Life. Here paſſes the Ecſtacy of Reconciliation to the Favour of God, the Aſſurances and Conſolations of the Spirit, the new Favours, the ſurprizing Peace and Joy, the blooming Hopes of an Eternal Inheritance, the Whiſpers of Angels, the Careſſes of Cherubims, the Kindneſſes of Seraphims, the gradual Opening of the Proſpect of Heaven, new Springs of Light, Irradiations, Tranſports, an unſupportable Love, and all the other wondrous and myſterious Paſſages of the Spiritual, Internal Life; and can only be told in thoſe Words that cannot be now uttered, ſuch as St. *Paul* heard while he was in Heaven.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the Contempt of Worldly Things.

WE undervalue our ſelves, when we value Worldly Things. Is there any Thing in this World can match the Dignity of the Soul? That is immortal, like it? That is ſpiritual and divine, as it? That was made in the Image of God, like it? That can quench its Ambition, or equal its Soar, or meaſure Eternal Ages with it, or appeaſe its Thirſt? We may eaſily abuſe it with the World, and degrade its Quality, and proſtitute its Powers; but the whole World is not able to give it a true and equal Satisfaction, ſuch as is proportionable to its Rank and Dignity, to its Promiſes and Pretenſions.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the Value of Heaven.

THE utmoſt Thirſt is ſatisfied there, the largeſt Ambition arreſted, and turn'd into Satisfaction and Content; the very Warmths and Heats of Fancy it ſelf are bounded here: If an Earthly Beauty moves and charms ſo much, what

will the Bosom of an Angel? What the Kindness of a Seraphim? What the softest Loves of an Archangel? What the Caresses and charming Conversations of a Cherubim? And if the Love of one would entertain so much, what will Throngs of bright and burning Loves? When we shall be encompass'd with Legions of flaming Beauties: What astonishing Satisfaction? What Joy, what Rapture, what Glory, what Amazement will the View of the eternal Mansions be attended with? Where the whole Scene is one flaming and everlasting Glory: In Comparison of which, the *Chinese*, the *Persian*, or *Indostan* Courts and Glory; that so far exceed all the Western Magnificence, are dark, and sad, and obscure as Lamps, and Urns, and Vaults, or desolate Ruins.

But to return to the bright Subject: If the Entertainments of Knowledge are so much valued, even here below; where Knowledge is so imperfect, so slow, and so laborious: What Satisfaction shall it be, to know all things in a Moment, to comprehend without Pains, to know the most useful things as well as the most abstruse; and that without the Toils and Fatigue of Study: To reach far into Futurities, to grasp all that's present, and hold all that's past; to exchange excellent Notions with the Angels, and

to

to see farther than all the Searches of Philosophy, and to comprehend the perfect Bounds of Truth and Falshood, so hid from this Life; to pass through all Science in a Moment, and pierce its deepest Secrets with a Glance; to be stor'd and fill'd with Notices, that are useful and excellent, that give Love and Obedience, that pour forth Praises and Hymns to the Infinite Fountain of Knowledge, that make us happy and wise for ever, and fix us for ever in the fullest Knowledge of Good and Evil; so as never to be impos'd upon by the last, in the Garb and Appearances of the first.

To be fill'd with the contemplative Beauties of Vertue and Holiness, and to stand fix'd on the bright Colours and Proportions, the eternal Lineaments and exactest Features, till the charming Objects have melted down our Souls into Ecstasies and oppressing Joys, and all the various Motions of a mighty, boundless Love; where every Look is Transport, and every Endearment is Ecstasie, and every Assurance faints the Soul; where the very Face is Love, and every Thought is charming, and the Motion wondrous, and the Discourse ravishing.

To behold the Beauties of the Martyrs, and the Glory of their Wounds; to assist at their Triumphs, and to view their

Crowns,

Crowns, and all the Reward of their Toils and Death: To dwell on the Brightneſs of the Prophets, and to behold the Thrones of the Apoſtles, the great Miniſters of the Chriſtian Inſtitution, and the flaming Glories of St. *Paul*, who was himſelf a College of Apoſtles, and bore the Weight of all the Churches.

But what amazing Joys will the Sight of the Son of God give? And what unconceivable Glories crown his very Humanity? Such as add to the Glories of Heaven it ſelf. On him our Love ſhall dwell for ever; on him we ſhall be fix'd for Ages; contemplating his boundleſs Love to the World, his infinite Sufferings, his unexpreſſible Death, and all the Triumphs of his Reſurrection; and thoſe amazing everlaſting Glories, for which he endur'd the Croſs, and deſpiſed the Shame.

How glorious will be the Sight of Heaven it ſelf? How dazling bright? How glorious with numberleſs Fires, and with the innumerable Multitude of fix'd Stars; and the flaming Body of the Sun, the vaſt Extent of the Heavenly Orbs, their wondrous and harmonious Motions.

How happy will be the Converſations there? How full of Ecſtaſie and

Love,

Love, of Beauty and Charms, where all is ſpoke in Numbers, and every Sound is Muſick, ſo far exceeding ought that ever was heard by mortal Ear, where Peace, and harmony, truth and Love, remain for ever in their Perfection; and whence, Malice and Diſcord, Rage and Subtlety are baniſh'd for ever, and all is Beauty, Love, and Light, Hallelujahs, Anthems, and Glory.

And which is a vaſt Addition to the Joy above: The Pleaſures ſhall be eternal, and the Rapture ſhall never die, the Shout and Triumph ſhall paſs through eternal Ages; the Glory ſhall never wither, and Beauty ſhall be always young, and the happy ſhall be happy for ever.

CHAP. XX.

Of the Uſe of Time, and this Life.

HEre we purchaſe Eternity: Here we trade for Heaven, here we lay hold on everlaſting Life; unſpeakable is the Value of every Moment of our Time while we live here, for as they go, ſo go the Ages of Eternity; that roll upon our preſent Induſtry, or Neglect.

He who undervalues his Time, ſlights Heaven too, in which it may be ſecur'd,

if

if rightly us'd; he disdains Crowns and everlasting Kingdoms, and Glory and Honour, and Immortality and Eternal Life; and preferrs a Life of Folly and Impertinence, of Sloth and nothing, to an Immense Happiness, to endless Joys, to the Society of Angels, to all that the Desire can grasp, or the Fancy can wish for: He would rather be idle than sav'd, he would rather do nothing than be equal to the Angels; he would not sweat for a Crown, nor disturb himself for a Kingdom, he preferrs his Ease to all that he can hear or read of: And whoever is this Man, he has bid Defiance to common Sence, and Interest, and Prudence, and whatever can promote his true and lasting Advantage. He raves of Ease, and mistakes its Nature, and has wrong Notions of the Labours of Repentance and Love, that give a greater Repose than any he is acquainted with; who will not enter into the Toils of Vertue, and the Exercises and Contentions of Wisdom, that adorn the Mind, and ennoble the Soul, and distinguish the Man, and give him greater Joys even in this Life, than Nature or the World affords.

Therefore, How does it import us to work while it is Day, before the Night comes, when no Man can work? On the one Hand, by an active and laborious

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Uſe of our Time in the Exerciſes of Religion, we ſecure all that's deſireable and infinite, lovely and eternal,; on the other Hand, we avoid all that's woful and amazing, horrible and intolerable, the Outer-Darkneſs, Indignation, and eternal Fires.

Everlaſting Reſt ſhall crown the Labours of a ſhort Life, and if we will not work while 'tis Day, we muſt weep out the eternal Night, in which no Man worketh, we muſt quit our Hopes and Expectations, the Rewards and Advantages of a generous Religion, flaming Glories, and everlaſting Ecſtaſies, and all this for the Sake of being idle, and the Pleaſure of doing nothing, or doing that that's fooliſher than nothing, when we are courted with Crowns, and endleſs Rewards beſpeak our Labour.

CHAP. XXI.

Of Chaſtity.

THE Beauty of Angels ſhews the Beauty of this Vertue, and the Deformities of Luſt ſhew it too; it triumph'd in the clean and ſacred Air of the Perſon of *Jeſus*, and adorn'd her who was bleſſed amongſt Women; more than Scepters or Ermins, Birth or Treaſures,

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or Blood, and a long and empty Genealogy of Anceſtors that are not us; and, a celeſtial Chaſtity, and unſpotted Vertue and Purity, gave her more than Empreſs or Queen. Wherever it reigns, the Mien is ſacred and Heavenly, and the Air chearful and divine, as Luſt is dark and polluted, ſtain'd and ſullied, cover'd with Horrour and Diſgrace, ſhameful and ſhameleſs, hating the Light: By Chaſtity the Mind is ſtrengthen'd, our Contemplations cleanſed, our better Deſires enflamed, our Wiſdom fortified, our Souls raiſed; it helps Devotion, aſſiſts Beauty, oppoſes Folly, quenches Temptation, and ſuppreſſes Luſt, and ennobles the very Body.

But Luſt, on the contrary, darkens the Soul, and brutes the Body, and ſullies the Reaſon, and weakens the Senſes, and puts out all our Glory and Ambition; and turns our Flight and Soar into groveling and wallow, and our Purity and Ambition into Shame and Confuſion, Contempt and Diſgrace, Retirement and Horrour: Tis the Blaſt of Beauty, the Enemy of Innocence, the Murderer of Peace, the Averſion of Angels, and the Scorn of the debauch'd themſelves.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

Of Spiritual Prudence.

THis is the Empreſs of all the Vertues, another Guardian-Angel to the Soul: By it ſhe waſtes the Enemy, and grows her ſelf: By it ſhe fortifies and entrenches her ſelf, and mines and batters the High Places of the Spiritual Wickedneſſes: By it the Wiles and Stratagems of the Spiritual Enemy are diſcover'd, their Approaches ſtopp'd, and the Fury of the Storm baffled and ſpent into a fooliſh, impotent Malice.

By Prudence we make the moſt of the Forces God has given us: And this alſo is the ſignal Gift of God. Without a Spiritual Wiſdom we ſhall be nothing, or quickly come to nothing. 'Tis a Nurſing-Mother to all the other Vertues; 'tis the Manager and Overſeer of all the Affairs of the Soul, that prunes the Vertues, as well as roots up Vices; that retrenches a too luxuriant Zeal, and gives Ballaſt to our Sails, and bids us walk ſoftly, when we would run our ſelves out of Breath; and by going too faſt to Heaven, never come thither. It warns us of the Length of the Journey, and the Difficulties of the Way, and that the Enemy will diſpute our Paſſage all along, and bids us guard

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and provide our ſelves accordingly, and arm our ſelves, not for a ſingle Battel, but for a War that is to laſt till Death, and a War that is manag'd againſt us with the utmoſt Stratagem, as well as Force, and with a mercileſs Enemy, that gives no Quarter, but puts all to the Ruin, and omits no Advantages, and ſpares no Malice, and plies us with a reſtleſs Induſtry, and purſues us roaring, and ſeizes on his Prey, like a Vulture, or a Leopard, or a ſtarv'd Lioneſs, and tears it for ever.

Prudence gives us a thorough Sight of our own Weakneſs, and thereby engages us to a double Care, and a reſtleſs Induſtry; and cures us of the Follies and Securities of Pride, and a miſtaken Strength, that betrays us in the Trial, and breaks with the leaſt Weight; and if we lean upon it, 'twill run into our Side, and make us wiſe by our Miſery, and remember to diſtruſt.

By Spiritual Arts we render the Labours of our Warfare fewer and leſs, and ineffectuate a Thouſand Stratagems and Deſigns of the Enemy, and make our Journey through the World eaſier and ſhorter, and prevent the many and ſad Labours of Indiſcretion, and the Ravages and Devaſtations that are made upon an imprudent Religion, by the ſubtile and over-reaching Adverſary, that hits every Blot, and

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is in with us at every Weakneſs, and endeavours to cruſh us at every Fall. But much of this Miſery would be prevented by a Spiritual Diſcretion; which conſiſts in nothing more than in an univerſal Moderation in uſing the Strength and the Graces of God, ſo as they neither ſuffer by Ruſt and Idleneſs, nor we by overworking our Spirits, and diſproportioning our Religion to our Natures, and our Zeal to our Strength, and by doing ſo much now, that we ſhall be able to do nothing hereafter; at one Time running our ſelves out of Breath, at another not ſtirring a Foot, and conſequently going back.

By Spiritual Prudence we ſecure the Growth of the other Vertues, and bring them to a quicker Perfection; we keep and improve what we have got, and make ſure Steps, and regular Advances, and ſecure our Conqueſts, and ſtill act with an equal Heat and Vigour, and move like a River, inſtead of rolling backwards and forwards like the Tide, now overflowing our very Duty, anon dry and barren as the naked Beach.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of not judging others in Matters of Opinion and Practice.

THere is more Hopes of a Fool, than of that Man that makes himſelf the Meaſure of Mankind. Let every Man perfect his own Life firſt, before he lives for others: Let him ſpend all his Care and Exactneſs at home, and let him correct others by his Example, not by his Cenſures in Matters of Opinion. Why ſhould I preſume that another does not make the beſt and the honeſteſt Uſe of his Judgment, as well as I? And if ſo, Why not as likely to be in the Right, as I; who has, perhaps, the better Judgment, and a greater Integrity; only comes ſhort of me in Pride and Uncharitableneſs?

If I judge my ſelf, I ſhall do that which is lawful, and uſeful, and good, and that that hurts no Body. But if I judge others, I ſhall hurt my ſelf, and tranſgreſs the Commandment, and do no Body any Good. We have enough to do at home; and we ſhould make an end there, before we go abroad with our Care and malicious Charity, or ſtay till others ſeek our Directions and Advice; and then too to take a good deal of Time, to conſider whether we are fit to give it to others,

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and whether we have enough for our ſelves, or whether we do not want: And thus, with the Help of God, we might put ſome Stop to our Neglect of our ſelves, and our inſolent and malicious Charity to others. We cannot cenſure our ſelves too much, nor others too little: Here we may love our ſelves as much as we will, and others as little as we pleaſe, and be ſo much the better Chriſtians. 'Tis a ſtrange perverſe ſort of Kindneſs, that hurts not only others, but our ſelves; and therefore is certainly beſt let alone in the Judgment of any wiſe or good-natur'd Man.

'Tis Recompence enough for not judging others, that we ſhall not be judged our ſelves: And it is Diſcouragement enough from judging others, that if we judge, we ſhall be judged; and if we condemn, we ſhall be condemned; and the Charity we refuſe to others, ſhall be denied to us; and that will make us ſenſible of the Wrong we have done our Neighbour, when we our ſelves feel the weight of the Injury cruſhing our own Shoulders, which ſeem'd light while it lay on others. Therefore, for my own ſake, I ought to be charitable in my Cenſures of others, that others may be ſo of me, and not deny me that which I ſo much deſire, and ſtand in need of, and can ſo ill be without.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of the Infinite Love of the Three Bleſſed Perſons of the Holy Trinity.

OH Sacred, infinite and moſt Holy Trinity of boundleſs Love! Teach me to write of this moſt ſacred and joyful Subject as pleaſes thee! To treat of Love with a Spirit of Love; to write what may enflame and burn, what may warm and raiſe my own and others Hearts, and provoke to Love and Praiſe, and Joy, to do and ſuffer whatever is moſt pleaſing to thee the Infinite Lover, the Fountain of Love, of Bounty, and Mercy.

Whoever conſiders the infinite Majeſty of God, his boundleſs and everlaſting Glories, and his infinite Love and Condeſcention to Man; muſt ſtand ſurprized, confounded and amaz'd; muſt ſwell with wonder; and, loſt and aſtoniſh'd, muſt cry out with *David*, his Anointed, *What is Man, that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of Man, that thou ſo regardeſt him?* That from the higheſt Heavens, and from the Throne of thy Glory, thou beholdeſt the way of the Son of Man, and ordereſt his Going, and appointeſt his Reward; that thou mad'ſt him to praiſe thee, and

to

to enjoy thee; to govern the Neather World, and to live for ever in the Upper? That thou haſt given him Reaſon and Grace, which are thy own ſelf? That thou haſt crown'd him with Glory and great Worſhip, and form'd him to thy own Image, and given him Immortality, and bid the Angels miniſter unto him, to ſtrengthen and conduct, to witneſs and encourage, to help and chear him on the Way to Everlaſting Happineſs.

How is the Mercy and Goodneſs of God diſplay'd to us under the Labours, and Guilts, and Wounds of Sin? When Iniquity has ſlain the Soul, and laid waſte the Man, and prey'd upon his Happineſs, and the Vulture has conſum'd his Liver, then the Goodneſs of God beholds and pities, recovers and reſtores, ſpeaks Mercy, and bids him live, and cloaths him with the Garments of Joy, and the triumphant Scene of being redeemed from ſo great a Death, to an immortal Kingdom: The Eternal Father forgives, the Son atones, the Holy Spirit comforts, and there is Joy diffuſed through all the Heavenly Legions, who ſing new Verſe to the Recovery of a Sinner, and raiſe the Anthem to brighter Numbers, and tune their Golden Harps, and touch their Lutes to ſofter Notes.

Whoever

Whoever conſiders the Gift of Reaſon alone, how great the Privilege, how exalted the Quality, how ſpiritual and unbounded the Prerogative; piercing on all Sides, endleſs, ſearching the whole Creation, and all the Works of God; now in the Earth, now remaining in the uttermoſt Parts of Heaven, now dwelling with the Body, now ſoaring to the Angels, and converſing with the Bleſſed, in Ecſtacies and Love, in Praiſe and Hymns, to the God of Reaſon, and to the Lord of Rational Souls, the Firſt and Infinite Reaſon, the Father of Intelligences, and Great Sourſe of Thought. Whoever, I ſay, conſiders theſe Excellencies, muſt ſtand amaz'd at the Greatneſs of the Gift, and praiſe the Power and the Bounty of the Giver.

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